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C O M M E N T A R Y

ON THE

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THE
B O O K of P S A L M S.

THE Book of Psalms is in the original intitled ספר תהלים seper tehillum; the Book of Hymns, or Praises: because, though it likewise contains prayers, complaints, histories, and descriptions, yet the principal part is taken up with the praises of God. The Greeks call them Psalms, which word signifies properly compositions set or sung to music. The far greatest part of the Psalms were composed by David, and the rest by several other inspired authors; which were added to those of David, when, according to the Jewish tradition, they were all collected together in one volume by Ezra, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, and placed among the canonical books. The Psalms are all written in a poetical style, though, perhaps, it is impossible to tell of what particular kind the poetry of the Hebrews was. The Psalms, however, abound with sublime and figurative expressions, sufficient to denominate them truly poetical. As the style of them is noble, so it is proper to raise the noblest thoughts in the minds of men; on which account this book has been always held in the greatest veneration; insomuch that in the earlier ages, the bishops, presbyters, and all the religious, were expected to have it by heart. Melancthon says of it, that it is the most elegant work extant in the world; and St. Basil tells us, that in it may be found a complete body of divinity. Hence the number of commentaries upon it are almost endless; above six hundred are enumerated, exclusive of those which have been written on the whole body of the Scriptures, and on particular Psalms; and no wonder, when we consider that there is such an useful variety in this book, as may, by an easy accommodation, be made to serve every one of our occasions. The Psalms are fitted to all persons and ages, to all manner of employments, and to all conditions and circumstances of life; but they have still one further excellence, that they contain a variety of striking prophecies concerning Christ and his church. Several learned writers have supposed the whole book to be applicable to Christ and the church; which, if we cannot admit in a primary sense, may certainly be allowed in a great measure in a secondary one: for, though the Psalms speak of David and his transactions, literally understood, yet, as David was a type of Christ, they undoubtedly in the spirit refer to him. The learned Bishop Chandler seems to have set this matter in a clear light: from the last words of David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. he infers, that David was a prophet, and delivered his psalms by the Spirit of God; and that in these psalms he spoke concerning the Messiah under his own person. When, therefore, he sings of his sufferings, his enemies, his success, his exaltation, and the like, he means those things not so much of himself as of the Messiah. He takes occasion from events which had befallen himself to foretel some such future things to the Messiah; for, though most of his psalms describe his past actions, yet, at the same time they are mingled with predictions of things to befall him hereafter, which, as to David, were over already, and therefore must be intended for some other, and this other has been ever reputed to be the Messiah. Had not this been the case, the Jewish church would never have made David's Psalms part of their daily worship; nor would David have delivered them to the church to be so employed, had it not been to instruct and support them in the knowledge and belief of the fundamental article, the future completion of the covenant by the Messiah. Were the Messiah not concerned in the Psalms, it were absurd to celebrate twice a-day, in their public devotions, the events of one man's life, who was deceased so long ago as to have no relation now to the Jews and the

circumstances of their affairs, or to transcribe whole passages from them into their prayers for the coming of the Messiah. See Bishop Chandler's Defence, vol. i. p. 195. The limits that we have prescribed to ourselves in these Introductions, render it impossible to give such a satisfactory account of this book as its importance deserves. We shall take occasion, however, in the course of our observations, to speak of such particulars as cannot with propriety be mentioned here; especially the titles, musical instruments, &c. &c. referring our readers, in the mean time, to Calmet's and Bossuet's excellent prefaces, Dr. Hammond, Mr. Allix, and others who have written upon the subject; only observing, that the Hebrews commonly divide the Psalter into five books; the first of which ends at the 46th, the second at the 79th, the third at the 82d, the fourth at the 101st, and the fifth at the 150th Psalm. The first four books conclude with the words amen, amen, in the Hebrew; and the fifth with hallelujah. The number of the canonical Psalms are a hundred and fifty; besides which the Syriac, most copies of the LXX, and the Anglo-Saxon version, furnish us with another; the title whereof is, "A Psalm of thanksgiving of David, when he had overcome Goliath." The version before us is posterior to that in the liturgy, and far more closely translated from the Hebrew; that being principally taken from the LXX. Calmet has prefixed to his Commentary a table of the Psalms, according to the order of time in which he supposes them to have been written.

P S A L. I.

The happiness of the godly; the unhappiness of the ungodly.

BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the

LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

P S A L. I.

Ver. 1. Blessed is the man] This Psalm is generally supposed to have been designed as a preface to the rest, and as a short summary of the whole book. The subject of it is, the difference between pious and ungodly men, both in this life and in that which is to come: it was composed either by the collector of this book of Psalms, or by David himself, as Apollinarius and others think. Fenwick, in his introduction to this Psalm, thinks that the subject of it, as of the whole book, is the Messiah; who seems, says he, to be *THE Man*, (for the Hebrew is emphatical,) whom the prophet here meant to describe as a Blessed One: and so judged St. Augustin. He came to give us an example and to fulfil all righteousness, and is, for that reason, represented as never walking in the counsel of the wicked, but placing his whole delight in the law of the Lord. The character of this Blessed One appears to be drawn here by way of climax. He does not walk after the counsel of the wicked; he does not stand, or even take a step in the way of sinners; he does not even sit in company, so as to have any intimacy or familiar correspondence with such scornful of God and his law, though occasionally, and for their good, he converses with them. Thus, *I have not sat with vain persons,—I will not sit with the wicked*, Ps. xxvi. 4, 5. plainly mean, "I will not make them

"my familiars or chosen companions;" and, thus taken, it seems most naturally to lead to the character of one whose whole delight is in the law of the Lord, and who, for that reason, will be so far from doing evil himself, that he will never enter into any familiarity with evil men. See Fenwick's Psalter in its original form, and Bishop Hare.

Ver. 3. Like a tree planted by the rivers of water] It is observed by Fleury, in his excellent dissertation concerning this and several other psalms of the like kind, whose subjects are purely moral, that the want of tender expressions and pathetic sentiments is sufficiently compensated by beautiful paintings, fine metaphors, and noble comparisons. The literal sense of the word פלגי rendered rivers, is divisions, which may refer to the custom of conveying water to orchards or gardens by cuts or trenches, from springs or rivers, to be diverted or stopped, or applied in a greater or less plenty to this or that plantation, as the gardener shall direct: and this acceptation of the word is very proper for this place, as referring to an abundantly flourishing fruit-tree. His and he should be rendered in this verse its and it; Whatsoever it doeth; i. e. the metaphor being kept up, "Whatsoever this tree bringeth forth, whether bud, blossom, or fruit, it shall prosper."

Ver. 4. Like the chaff] This comparison is frequently used by the Psalmist, and it receives great illustration and emphasis, when we consider that the people of Judea had

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

their threshing-floors on an eminence; that the method of winnowing their corn was, by throwing it up against the wind with a shovel, and that they chose this lofty situation, that the wind might act with more force, and drive the chaff away more easily. The wicked seem to be here compared to chaff, because, instead of continually meditating, and minding the law of God, they are continually hurried on by their corrupt affections from one wickedness to another, and so rendered unable to abide the judgment of the great day. This seems implied in the words, *Therefore they shall not stand in the judgment.* See Shaw's Travels, and Fenwick. It should be considered, that, in general, the Psalms were made at a time when God governed the Jews with an equal providence; and, according to the promises and threatenings of the law, gave good things to those who obeyed him, and as surely punished the wicked, even in this world. But with us the case is otherwise. We have clearer and better promises; and it is apparent enough, that there is an unequal distribution of things in this world; so that we must wait for our reward till we enter into the next life, when the Son of God shall render to every man according to his work. We must not, therefore, expect that this, and many other such promises, dispersed throughout the Psalms, should always be literally fulfilled in this world; for we can apply them to ourselves, as Christians, no otherwise than as certain assurances, that they who are entitled to them are undoubtedly in God's favour; and, therefore, if we behave so as to deserve them, according to the literal promise to the Jews, we may humbly hope, that either they will be made good to us here, or else, which is far better, we shall, in the world to come, receive a much greater reward. It is observable, that in 2 Cor. ix. 9. where St. Paul quotes Ps. cxii. 9. he breaks off in the middle of the verse; which seems the more extraordinary, because there are but a few words left: *He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever:* here he stops; and the reason seems to be, because the remaining part of the verse, *his horn shall be exalted with honour,* relates rather to the temporal reward, which the Psalmist assured his countrymen, the Jews, that the charitable man should have: and this the Apostle left out, as an improper consideration for his Christian disciples; for whom, as their views were so much more noble, it was a sufficient encouragement to consider, that *their righteousness should remain for ever.* I here mention this once for all; and, though there are many passages in the Psalms, where the same observation might be proper, I shall presume that it need not to be repeated.

Ver. 5. Shall not stand in the judgment] That is, "They shall have nothing to allege in their defence, but shall be condemned without remission." The Syriac renders it, *They shall not be acquitted.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, This Psalm opens with the description of the holy and truly happy man. *Blessed is the man, or, O the blessedness of the man!* how great, how unutterable,

in time and eternity! His character is strongly marked; and by his fruits he may be known. He *walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly;* does not take his maxims from the world, which lieth in wickedness, nor fashion his conduct after their destructive ways; *nor standeth in the way of sinners,* though himself was once such; *nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful;* however high their pretences to superior wisdom, and however much they affect to treat with contempt the revealed will of God: such children of pride shall not have his ear for a moment; their company he will shun as a plague, and their breath as infectious. *But his delight is in the law of the Lord.* This sacred clue the man of God with delight follows, and in his law doth he meditate day and night: his Bible is his companion, he wishes no better entertainment; the glorious truths engage his deep meditation, are the matter of his daily converse; and if by night his eyes are kept waking, his thoughts are pleasingly occupied in God's word: in this best course his soul prospers in every divine disposition, and consequently partakes of true and lasting felicity; for holiness and happiness are inseparable. *And he shall be, or then shall be, like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.* When, by divine grace, he is thus enabled to delight and meditate in God's word, the gracious effects of it will be evident; his leaf of profession continues green and flourishing, and his holy fruits of righteousness abound. The Lord, whose planting he is, waters him every moment; conveys to his soul the living streams of divine grace, from Jesus the living fountain; and thus he grows tall as the cedar, and fruitful as the vine; nor is his state fading, his leaves withering, or his fruit blasted like the untimely fig's: no, *His leaf also shall not wither.* Preserved by Almighty grace, decay shall not tarnish his beauty, nor apostacy lay the axe to the root; but *whatsoever he doeth shall prosper;* every prayer shall receive an answer of peace; every labour shall be attended with success; every providence be sanctified; and, in short, all things work together for his good. Such is the blessed, holy, happy man. May my soul bear the divine impression, and correspond more to this amiable character!

2dly, The very contrast to those above described, is the character of *the ungodly;* they are not so; sin is their way; the company they keep is, like themselves, ungodly; their opinions are erroneous, as their practice is perverse. They abide in the paths of wickedness, and sit down content with their own deceivings; negligent of God's word, never consulting it in secret; and if they sit under it, what a weariness is it? Their thoughts, dissipated in pursuits of worldly vanity, or fleshly indulgences, never fix on the sacred volume; nor day nor night are they occupied therein. Like a blasted tree their leaf is withered, and, instead of yielding fruit, is only fit fuel for the flames: the curse of God is upon them in all the labour of their hands, and misery follows them closer than their shadow. *They are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.* Vanity is stamped on all their enjoyments; they are driven before

P S A L. II.

The kingdom of Christ: kings are exhorted to accept it.

WHY do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying,*

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

the breath of every temptation; light and despicable, in God's account, as the dust of the balance, and ready to suffer the eternal blasting of the breath of his displeasure; when, with his fan in his hand, he shall thoroughly purge his floor, and the chaff shall be burnt with fire unquenchable. *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment:* in that dreadful day, when God shall summon to his bar the guilty sons of Adam, to receive their eternal doom, then shall confusion cover them, every plea be silenced, every mouth be stopped. Though, with hypocrisy, perhaps, they once joined in the assembly of God's saints, their place shall be no more found; *nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous:* an awful, an eternal separation shall be made; these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal: *For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous;* they walk by faith in Christ the living way, and they are accounted righteous, as accepted in him; and are really righteous, as they derive a divine nature from him; God knows them, sees and approves the way in which they go, and will soon everlastingly reward them. *But the way of the ungodly shall perish:* they have chosen their delusions, and must perish in their own deceiving; their way is always grievous, and the end thereof is misery and death eternal. Lord, shut not up my soul with sinners!

Let the righteous rejoice; let the sinner tremble. In a moment this dread eternity opens, and their everlasting state is determined: oh! that it might awaken the fears of the ungodly, and quicken the diligence of the faithful!

P S A L. II.

THE Jewish rabbis expound this Psalm (as Raschi informs us in his comment on the first verse) of king Messiah; though he himself explains it in the literal sense, as relative to David. The Chaldee paraphrase seems also to apply the Psalm to the Messiah. That, in the primary sense, David speaks of himself, I think there can be no reason to doubt; and Bishop Patrick acknowledges, that, under the history of David, it contains an illustrious prophecy of the kingdom of Christ; and, accordingly, he explains it first of David, and then of Christ, his son. We have, therefore, explained the whole Psalm as first describing the history of David's appointment by God to be king of Israel; and if the circumstances of the description do, in their literal sense, belong also to Christ, and are more eminently fulfilled in him than they ever were or could be in David, then this Psalm, in its literal sense, is equally descriptive of Christ as of David; and therefore very justly applied to him by the writers of the New Testament. It is certain that this Psalm was penned after the translation of the ark to Mount Zion; because it expressly calls Mount Zion *The hill of God's holiness*, which name could not belong to it till God had chosen it for the residence of the ark; and it

must have been composed after the message he received from God by Nathan, of the perpetual establishment of his house, his throne, and kingdom, 2 Sam. vii. 1, &c. because he makes particular mention of God's determined purpose in favour of himself and family: nor could any time be more proper for a composition of this nature, than when this instance of God's peculiar favour to him was fresh in his mind, and he was now about to enter into new wars with neighbouring and powerful princes; for nothing could tend more to inspire his people with resolution and courage, than his assuring them that God beheld the attempts of his enemies with scorn and derision, and would enable him to break them with as much ease as he could dash in pieces a potter's vessel. See Dr. Chandler; from whom the following notes on this Psalm are principally taken.

Ver. 1. Why do the heathen rage? Gather together; or, as in the Margin of our Bibles, *Tumultuously assemble.* Cocceius translates the root *רָגַז* *ragaz* by *convenire concorditer*, to meet together with unanimity, or one consent, whatever be the purpose of such meeting; and this sense suits well the place before us; as it represents the nations confederating together to disturb David's reign, and uniting their forces to hinder the increase of his power. It also answers to the fact, as related 2 Sam. viii. 1.

Ver. 2. The kings of the earth set themselves, &c.] Or, *Rise up, and the rulers assemble together.* Chandler renders it, *Set themselves in opposition, and instigate each other.* This gives a very strong and significant meaning, as David's enemies urged and instigated each other in their opposition to him. Or, if we apply it to David, in his great successor the Messiah, it answers to real facts; the Jewish priests, elders, and council, instigating false witnesses to accuse him, Pilate to condemn, and the people to clamour their Messiah to the cross; the people instigating Pilate to release Barabbas, and crucify Jesus; and the devil instigating them all to perpetrate this impious murder. The opposition to which they instigated one another, was *against the Lord, and against his Anointed; Jehovah*, because he exalted David to be king in Jerusalem; and because Jesus, whom the princes and people crucified, was that Messiah and Saviour, in whom God had determined that the throne of David should be perpetuated as long as sun and moon should endure.

Ver. 3. Let us break their bands] This is the language of the nations and people instigating each other to this impious war. To be in bonds, and tied with cords, is to be reduced to the utmost state of vassalage: and the kings and nations counted their subjection to David the most dishonourable servitude, and therefore were determined, if they could, to *break their bands*, and *cast away their cords*; i. e. to renounce the dominion of David whom the Lord had made king, and free themselves from all subjection to him. And thus the Jews, the nations and princes

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.

5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

6 Yet have I set my King upon my holy

hill of Zion.

7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the

princes of the earth, united themselves in opposition to the kingdom of Christ, to destroy his authority, extirpate his religion, and prevent men's obedience to, and worship of God, by Jesus Christ.

Ver. 4. He that sitteth, &c.] Or, *He that dwelleth.* This is spoken of God, (after the manner of men,) to denote his utter contempt of the opposition of his enemies; the perfect ease with which he was able to disappoint all their measures, and crush them for their impiety and folly; together with his absolute security that his counsels should stand, and his measures be finally accomplished; as men laugh at, and hold in utter contempt, those whose malice and power they know to be utterly vain and impotent. The introducing God as thus laughing at and deriding his enemies, is in the true spirit of poetry, and with the utmost propriety and dignity. The whole description is grand: Jehovah is he who is seated in the heavens, far beyond the effects of their rage and malice: from thence he sees their secret counsels, confederate armies, and united obstinate endeavours to oppose what he had solemnly decreed.

Ver. 5. Then shall he speak unto them] This denotes, not God's speaking to them by an audible voice; but his making them know, to their full conviction, by the disappointment of their schemes, and the vengeance taken of them, that David was established king in Jerusalem, and should reign in his son the Messiah throughout all generations. For David declares that God would *speak to them in his wrath*; i. e. by the effects of it; a language the most expressive and convincing of all others. The word **בָּהַל** *bahal* rendered *vex* (in the Margin of our Bibles, *trouble*), has a very strong and significant meaning; it implies, that God should put them into the *utmost terror*, and *consternation of mind*, and deprive them of all power and ability of soul and body, to save themselves from the vengeance which should be executed on them.

Ver. 6. Yet have I set my King] It should have been rendered, *I, even I, have anointed my King on Zion*, or rather, *over Zion, the mountain of my holiness*. We do not read that David was ever anointed on Mount Zion, or in Jerusalem, king over Israel; and the meaning is not that God had anointed David on Zion, but to be king and reign in Zion; because David had chosen it for his own residence, and God for the habitation of the ark. The meaning of the passage seems to be this: David, probably, had some intelligence of the new confederacy which was forming against him. But he speaks of the confederate princes and nations with contempt; fully assured that their schemes would all be frustrated. How could he be thus assured? Because God had anointed him king; and, therefore, as they were confederate against God and his anointed, all their projects must finally come to nothing, and God would soon con-

vince them of it, by speaking to them in his wrath, and letting them know by the most convincing arguments—I, even I, have anointed, or established my king on Zion.

Ver. 7. I will declare the decree] Or, *I will tell of a decree.* David having introduced God as declaring that he would speak to the confusion of his enemies, and convince them that he had made him king in Zion, further says, for the encouragement of his subjects, that he would relate to them God's purpose concerning him, and the gracious assurances that he had been pleased to grant him. The decree concerning David was this: *Thou art my son, &c.* God himself was properly king over Israel; Pf. lxxxix. 18. David styles him, *his God, and his king*; Pf. lxxviii. 24. but he declared concerning David, *Thou art my son.*—*I will make him my first-born*; Pf. lxxxix. 27. namely, by giving him the rights of primogeniture, and advancing him as such to the kingdom. Kings in general, and magistrates, are styled *gods*, and *sons of the Most High*, in scripture; Pf. lxxxii. 1. 6. and by profane writers. See Callim. Hymn. in Jov. v. 80. But there is a peculiar propriety in this expression, *Thou art my son*, as used of David; because God did, in a great measure, by fixing him on the throne, and making it hereditary in his family, cede and transfer the kingdom and government, which were originally in himself, to David and his posterity; hereby making him, as it were, his son and successor in the kingdom. When God adds, *I have begotten thee*, it is not another expression denoting the same as *thou art my son*, but implies his being made son and heir by adoption. This description to denote the adoption of any person by, and his copartnership with another in, or succession to his kingdom, is not peculiar to the sacred writings. See Pliny's Panegyric on Trajan, cap. 6, 7, &c. The words *this day*, I suppose, denote the day in which David received the divine decree or constitution by the hand of Nathan. This I apprehend to be the literal meaning of the words, as they belong to David in person; but as they belong to him in his most illustrious successor, they have yet a nobler meaning. They are cited by St. Paul, in his sermon to the Jews at Antioch, as predictive of the resurrection of Christ; and by the author to the Hebrews applied to him as a proof of his *being made better*, that is, exalted to higher honour and dignity *than the angels*, by his resurrection and endless life. Heb. i. 5. *God, having declared him to be his Son with power, by his resurrection from the dead, and session at the right hand of the Majesty on high.* See Rom. i. 4. and Acts, iv. 25. which contains a full proof that this Psalm was written by David.

Ver. 8, 9. Ask of me, &c.] This, as it refers to David, denotes God's promise to extend his dominion over all the neighbouring states and princes that opposed him, around all the borders of Judæa; and this promise was literally made

heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

made good. But this extent of dominion is too small to come up to the full meaning of the expressions here made use of, which were more amply fulfilled in his great successor the Messiah, to whom God put all things in subjection in heaven and earth, and who shall finally crush, as with an iron rod, all who will not have him to reign over them. Some writers have supposed, that the ninth verse more immediately alludes to the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews.

Ver. 10. Be instructed] Or, *Be reformed.*

Ver. 12. Kiss the Son] The Son primarily denotes David himself; but the character is more especially applicable to his great successor, who is the Son of God, in a more appropriate and much higher sense than David. A kiss in the East was a token of respect and reverence from inferiors to their superiors: so that *kissing David* means paying that homage and veneration which was due to him as God's adopted son and king, and which was paid to eastern monarchs by their subjects. Kissing the hand of sovereign princes is now an act of homage, an act of fealty and submission. As applied to the Messiah, it means submission to him in his character of Saviour, and honouring him, as we also honour the Father, in obedience to that Father's command. Dr. Chandler renders the next clause, *and, like wandering sheep, ye utterly perish.* The original notion of אָבֵד *abed*, is not only to *perish*, but to *wander*, as sheep do; and, consequently, to be lost and perish by wandering so far as that they can never return or be recovered to the fold. See Psalm cxix. 176. Jer. l. 6. *But a little*, refers either to degree or duration; for the word מְעַט *meat*, is frequently used in both senses. "If he arouse but a little of his indignation, or should his indignation last but a little while, the effect will be so awful, that it will abundantly appear that they only are happy who trust in, and are secure under, his protection."

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Since the day that, after war in heaven, rebellion began on earth at the instigation of the old serpent cast out from his place in glory, the fierce contest and struggle has continued between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman: and this, with especial bitterness, was renewed when the bruiser of his head appeared incarnate, to destroy him and all his hated works. We have here,

1. This furious opposition to Christ and his kingdom described. Though he appeared as the prince of peace, came diffusing blessings on every side, brought the most welcome tidings, spake as never man spake, and, in his life, appeared the pattern of every thing great and excellent; yet against

him is the fiercest rage of earth and hell levelled. [1.] The instruments employed are the heathen, the Roman governor and soldiery, and the people, the peculiar people, the Jews: their kings and governors head the riotous assembly; and Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the whole sanhedrim, unite for the destruction of the divine Messiah. Vainly promising themselves a temporal king, they cannot bear the pretensions of the lowly Jesus; and, confounded by his just and severe rebukes, they gnash upon him with indignation; persecute him with the most deliberate and unrelenting enmity; and, laying aside every quarrel among themselves, are joined in strictest league to suppress his rising kingdom among men. *Note;* (1.) The cause of Jesus has ever hitherto been a suffering one; they who embark in it must begin by taking up the cross. (2.) The religion of Jesus has often groundlessly excited the jealousy of earthly princes; his kingdom is not of this world. (3.) They who were at enmity, as great as was between Jew and Gentile, Scribe and Pharisee, will readily consent to drop all their differences, when the cause of Jesus is to be run down; and cordially unite against him and his. (4.) The enmity of the heart against the religion of Jesus, is unspeakably more bitter and inveterate than against anything beside; nor will the greatest harmlessness of conduct, or purity of manners, soothe the rage of persecutors. (5.) It is our comfort, that, however mighty our enemies, or however politic their contrivances, they imagine a vain thing; the church, and every faithful believer, are fixed upon a rock, against which the powers of earth and the gates of hell cannot prevail. [2.] The occasion of this fury is observed; they cannot endure the government of the Lord's Anointed, or bear him in any of his characters as prophet, priest, or king. Wise in their own conceit, they will not submit as little children to learn his heavenly doctrine: proud in their own sufficiency, and trusting in their own righteousness, they cannot stoop, as miserable and perishing sinners, to seek his atoning blood, as the only foundation of their acceptance before God: and, hating the holy ways of this heavenly king, their stubborn hearts reject his rule, and that internal spiritual kingdom which he erects in the soul, mortifying every earthly, sensual, devilish temper; this they cannot endure. *Note;* None can be the subjects of Christ's kingdom, who do not renounce their own wisdom, righteousness, and strength, and come to Jesus, to teach, atone for, and rule in and over them.

2. As the contest is highly unequal, the ruin of the enemy is sure. How vain for worms to oppose the mighty God? for dust of the earth to rise up against him who sitteth in the heavens? how foolish that secret counsel which

P S A L. III.

The security of God's protection.

A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.

LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

2 Many *there be* which say of my soul, *There is no help for him in God.* Selah.

3 But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

which cannot be hid from his all-seeing eye! and how mad the attempt to dethrone Omnipotence itself! (1.) God derides the impotent menaces of his foes; he sits secure against their rage, serene and undisturbed with their tumults; and looks down with scorn on their vain imaginations. (2.) His indignation rises at their wickedness, and at last he breaks the silence that he had kept, speaking to them in the awful strokes of providential judgments, and vexing them in his sore displeasure; filling their hearts with inward misery, and quickly about to pour out upon them wrath unto the uttermost. (3.) With triumph the king, Messiah, is exalted in spite of all his foes: *Yet have I set, or, Behold I have set, &c.* As mediator, he is invested with a delegated rule and authority, and given to be head of his church, the spiritual mount Zion; and to his sceptre all must bow as willing subjects, or break under the rod of his indignation as obstinate rebels.

2dly, Christ, being exalted to the mediatorial throne, speaks in his own person: *I will declare the decree.* 1. His title to the throne is here produced: *The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee: Which some interpret of the eternal generation of the Son of God, and ascribe to his person as begotten, though of the same substance with the Father, co-existent and co-eternal.* I rather incline to refer it to him as mediator, and as spoken either when the purposes of God's grace to man were first declared in heaven, and the exalted Jesus in this divine character received the worship of adoring angels: or when, at his incarnation, his baptism, and most eminently at his resurrection and ascension, *he was declared to be the Son of God with power,* Rom. i. 4. 2. His influence, in virtue of this advancement, is described. Being exalted to the throne of Majesty on high in virtue of his sufferings, according to the conditions of the covenant of redemption, all power is given him in heaven and in earth. His intercession is now effectual; the Father always heareth him. Two things are promised him at his request: (1.) The hearts of believers. *I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* Thus we see that the gospel of Jesus has already gone forth unto the ends of the earth, and reached even to us. Multitudes of the various nations of the world have yielded themselves up through grace to his happy government; and we are still expecting, in virtue of this promise, the more extensive spread of the Redeemer's influence, *when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.* Our blessed island, in profession, already owns its sway; happy for us if our inmost souls actually enjoyed his government, and he reigned Lord of every motion there! (2.) The necks of his enemies. *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.* They who re-

fuse the Saviour's gentle sway, must feel his heavy hand: the Jews, who rejected him, were first broken in pieces and dispersed: the heathen Rome, where the blood of his martyrs was shed, is long since destroyed; and it remains, that Rome, papal as well as pagan, still red with the blood of the saints, receive the same terrible doom, with all the other anti-christian powers, whether Jewish, Mahometan, or heathen; whose desolations are determined, when the Lord shall take his great power and reign, and his foes be made his foot-stool. Sinner, whoever thou art, tremble at that day, when, if thou art found an enemy and rebel against Jesus and his government, thy final and eternal overthrow will be completed, and thou as unable to resist as a potter's vessel before an iron rod, and thy ruin as irreparable as these shreds which never more can be united.

3dly, *Here is wisdom.* Since Jesus is exalted king in Zion, and opposition vain, it is most highly our interest to court his favour, as it is our bounden duty to submit to his government.

1. The address is directed to the kings and judges of the earth. Those who, as most exalted, will be most apt to say, Who is Lord over us? Let them know that there is one who is higher than they, with whom is no respect of persons; and in whose sight they stand equally accountable with the meanest subjects: and as their station and influence is great, from them especially the Lord requires obedience, that they may set an example to those who are committed to their charge.

2. The exhortation directed to them is, (1.) *To serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him with trembling, or reverence.* The service of Jehovah is the duty and happiness of every creature: his will must be our rule, his worship our daily exercise, his glory our constant aim. To rejoice in him, is both our privilege and duty, as our reconciled God in Christ, as our best portion in time, and our exceeding great reward in eternity: yet with fear and reverence we are commanded to serve him, and rejoice before him; knowing the corruption and deceitfulness of our hearts, the snares of the enemy, and the dangers with which we are encompassed; and especially need we fear the workings of pride and self-righteousness, which are so apt to creep in, and turn our eyes off the Lord Christ and our rejoicing in him, to have confidence in the flesh. *Note,* Holy jealousy and filial fear are most consistent with, yea, most productive of substantial and abiding joy. (2.) *To kiss the Son.* God wills that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.

3. The exhortation is enforced by a twofold powerful argument. (1.) *Let him be angry;* for, though he sits on his throne, meek and gentle as a lamb to those who come to him as humble supplicants, he will roar as a lion against the obstinately impenitent, and tear them in pieces, while there

5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of peo-

ple, that have set themselves against me round about.

7 Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God:

there is none to deliver them. *Let he be angry, and ye perish from the way; that is, by leaving the way of righteousness, and turning to the paths of sin and death: or, in the way, being cut off in the midst of your iniquities: or, suddenly, as the word may be rendered, by some divine judgment stopping the sinner short in his career of wickedness. When his wrath is kindled but a little, the least sin provokes it, and the least measure of his wrath is intolerable; and therefore, how should we fear to offend? (2.) Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* The pleasantness of Christ's yoke should engage us to yield our necks to it, as the terrors of his wrath should lead us to avoid them. They who trust in him are blessed; they now enjoy his favour and regard, peace in their conscience, reviving confidence of his protection, and transporting hope of the glory which shall be revealed; and hereafter how unutterably more blessed will they appear, when this king in Zion shall sit on the mount in judgment, place them at his right hand, welcome them to his presence, seat them on his throne; and while their enemies and his are gnawing their tongues with pain, and doomed to dwell in everlasting burnings, they shall be filled with everlasting consolations, and spend a glorious eternity in adoration, love, and praise. Lord, may my happy lot be with them!

P S A L. III.

Title.] מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד *mizmor ledavid*; the word *mizmor* comes from זָמַר *zemer*, to cut, to etch or engrave, and denotes a psalm or song; not, I think, as Mr. Le Clerc supposes, because these compositions were cut into short periods; but because they were set to music, and cut into notes, the song being engraven with the tune; so that it is properly, A psalm in score. The occasion upon which it is declared to have been written, and the nature of the hymn, shew it to have been David's; and it was impossible that a hymn could be composed with greater propriety or nobler sentiments of religion, upon so extraordinary an event as that of the rebellion of his own son, who had drawn several from most of the tribes of Israel into the conspiracy; so that he was given over by many as absolutely lost, and his enemies thought it was beyond the power of God to save him. Chandler. The psalm is also in some degree typical of our Saviour's sadness and agony, and of his prayer on mount Olivet; (Luke xxii. 39, 41.) the very same mount to which David went up, when he is supposed to have poured forth the substance of this prayer. See 2 Sam. xv. 30. For more concerning the titles of the psalms, see the first note on the next psalm.

Ver. 1, 2. Lord, how are they increaseful that trouble me! This psalm answers in every part of it to the inscription. When David was resettled on his throne he penned it, to commemorate both his danger and his deliverance. David begins it with a representation of his danger. Absalom had stolen away the hearts of many of the people. Achitophel aimed at his destruction; and Shimei, with others of his enemies, reproached him, as utterly forsaken of his

God; while many of his friends undoubtedly trembled for his safety; and had Achitophel's advice been followed, his ruin, morally speaking, would have been unavoidable. The language in the second verse seems to have been that of his enemies, who imagined that they had him as their prey so secure, that God himself was not able to deliver him. Thus the chief priests, scribes, and elders, insulted his great son, the Messiah, when they had brought him to the cross; bidding defiance to the power of God himself to rescue him out of their hands. See Matt. xxvii. 43. and Chandler.

Ver. 2. Selah] Various are the conjectures about the meaning of this word, says Dr. Chandler; but, whatever has been hitherto offered in explication of it, is no more than conjecture, and I am far from being able to satisfy myself or others about it. The reader may consult Noldius in his Annotations, p. 540. and Pfeiffer, p. 295. Bishop Bossuet, following the authority of the greater number of interpreters, translates it by the Greek διαπαυα, and supposes that it implies some note or stop in music; but Parkhurst, after Fenwick, is of opinion with many other learned men, that it is inserted as a note requiring our particular attention: N. B. attend to, or mind this; literally, according to the root, *strew, or spread it out*; i. e. before the eyes of your mind, that you may thoroughly consider it. This interpretation is confirmed by Ps. ix. 16. where the word *Higgaion* is put before *Selah*, at the end of the verse. Now *Higgaion* certainly signifies meditation, or a fit subject for meditation; and so shews *Selah* to be really a *nota bene*. See Fenwick's Hebrew Titles on the Psalms, p. 112.

Ver. 3. But thou, O Lord, art a shield, &c.] David, in the midst of his distress, having recollected himself, immediately quiets his mind by trusting in God. By prayer he recommended himself to the divine protection; and so calmed his fears, that he quietly laid himself down, slept comfortably, and waked tranquil and easy, as if no danger surrounded him; and resolved that the most formidable combinations against him should not discourage and terrify him: ver. 4, 5, 6. *Thou art my glory*, signifies "I rejoice and glory in thy protection; as well knowing that thou art able to restore me to my former dignity and power." *To lift up the head*, is the mark of prosperity, ease, and comfort, and of a mind elated and joyful in the possession of it. Thus Zophar speaks of the prosperous hypocrite, that his joy should endure but for a moment, though his head should reach up unto the clouds: Job xx. 5, 6. Something like Horace, *Sublimi feriam sidera vertice*; which Mr. Dacier interprets, *J'apporterai mon superbe front jusqu' aux cieux*. When, therefore, David speaks of God as the lifter-up of his head, he means that God would remove his distresses, make him to triumph over all his enemies, and cause him to look up with cheerfulness and joy upon the full recovery of his prosperity and honours. Chandler.

Ver. 5, 6. I laid me down and slept] It was an argument of settled courage, and shows the unspeakable advantage of a religious confidence in God, that David was able, in such distressing and dangerous circumstances, thus to lie down

for thou hast smitten all my enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

8 Salvation *belongeth* unto the LORD: thy blessing *is* upon thy people. Selah.

down, calmly sleep, and wake in peace: but what cannot that man do, who is *sustained* of God, *propped up* by him, as the word שָׁמַר *samak* properly signifies, by inspiring his mind with resolution and courage? Chandler.

Ver. 7. Arise, O Lord, &c.] David having related in the former verses the state of his mind during his flight, in the following he expresses his thankfulness to God for his deliverance, which he ascribes entirely to his power and goodness; and, conscious that his future safety must depend on his favour, he suddenly cries out, *Arise, O Jehovah, and save me, O my God!* and then, instantly recollecting the salvation that God had wrought for him, he starts into the thankful acknowledgment of it. *Verily, thou hast smitten all mine enemies.* They who know what the pleasures of devotion are, cannot be unacquainted with these sudden transitions of the mind from one object to another, and the various affections which are excited, as the different thoughts of the heart awaken and enliven them. David in this verse compares his enemies to savage beasts, which tear their prey with their teeth, and grind it with their jaws. In countries abounding with these ravenous creatures, such allusions are natural and expressive. David here encourages himself in God, by the experience he had of his gracious interposition in his favour; by saving him from his cruel enemies, who frequently attempted his destruction. But God *smote them on the cheek-bone, and broke their teeth*; i. e. utterly deprived them of their power to hurt him; as a wild beast is disabled from devouring its prey, when its jaws are broken, and its teeth dashed out. Chandler.

Ver. 8. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord, &c.] This should rather be rendered, *Salvation be unto the Lord; thy blessing be unto thy people*: It shews David's generosity of heart, thus to become an intercessor for the prosperity of his people, many of whom had engaged in support of the unnatural rebellion of his son.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, David, in deep distress, is here flying from his unnatural son; and, as human help failed him, his heart looks up to God; the greatness of his trials could not so discompose his spirit, as to interrupt his communion with the father; nor his danger, however imminent, sink him into despair. We have here,

1. The complaint of the suffering David poured forth into the bosom of the compassionate God: not that he wants our prayers to inform him, but he will be thus inquired of. Many were his foes; the revolt was general, and he, a fugitive, driven from his capital; his cause, to appearance, desperate; and his enemies triumphant and insulting, as if God had forsaken him, and either, as they blasphemously suggested, could not or would not succour him. The sufferings of the Son of David, in the same place, were greater still; betrayed by one disciple, denied by another, forsaken by all; the multitude thirsting for his blood; seized, condemned, insulted, mocked, scourged, crucified; and while he hung upon the bloody tree, he heard the blasphemy of the multitude, deriding his confidence, as utterly forsaken of his God. Such enemies also every

faithful follower of Jesus must expect; many within, many without, seeking to trouble his repose, and shake his confidence in God: a frowning world will threaten, a tempting devil suggest distressing doubts and fears, and an unbelieving heart be ready to despond: but, through divine grace, he rises superior to his fears, rejects the dishonourable thought, and rests his hope secure upon the Divine protection.

2. The Psalmist professes his unshaken confidence in God, notwithstanding all his foes: the higher the storm of temptation blew, the deeper his faith took root in God. *Thou art a shield for me*, to protect me from the impending danger, to quench the fiery darts which my insulting foes hurl against me; and, safe under thy shadow, I shall rest from fear of evil. *My glory*; the author of all the greatness to which he had been advanced; and still, in his low estate, in God's salvation he would glory, confident of his restoration: *and the lifter-up of mine head*, though now bowed down—through outward troubles. Thus Jesus, covered with the shield of the Almighty, was rescued from the hand of his persecutors; foiled the temptations of the wicked one; rose superior to all his sufferings; was glorified by his Father in his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of Majesty on high; and now is lifted up above all his enemies to reign till they are for ever put under his feet.

2dly, The Psalmist had often sweet experience, how good it was for him to draw near to God; for he ever heareth the prayer of the poor destitute: and, as faith encourages the voice of prayer, prayer reciprocally confirms and strengthens our confidence in God. We have here,

1. The application which David made to God, and the answer of peace that he received: *I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill.* The eagerness of his cry spoke the fervour of his heart; and God heard him with favourable acceptance, out of his holy hill, the mount Sion, where he had chosen his residence: Thither the ark had been sent by David on his flight; but the God of the ark was with him, to hear and help him. The great Redeemer thus, in the days of the flesh, with strong crying and tears, presented his supplications, and was strengthened; and every faithful soul has a thousand times experienced the support derived from effectual fervent prayer, and know, by unquestionable evidence, that there is a God who heareth prayer.

2. The effect of the divine answer from God was, rest and peace. Though in the midst of danger from open enemies and suspected friends, *I laid me down and slept: I awaked; for the Lord sustained me.* No terrors disturb his repose; that guardian whom he trusted sweetly closed his eyes, and he awaked, safe and refreshed, to see the welcome light of the returning morn. Thus Jesus slept in the grave; and, after a short night, awaked on the morning of the resurrection-day, as a giant refreshed with wine: and does not every believer experience the same divine protection; having commended himself into the arms of Jesus, he lays in peace his head upon his pillow; while conscious terrors

P S A L. IV.

David prayeth for audience. He reproveth and exhorteth his enemies. Man's happiness is in God's favour.

To the chief musician on Neginoth.

A Psalm of David.

HEAR me when I call, O God of my
righteousness: thou hast enlarged me

when I was in distress: have mercy upon me,
and hear my prayer.

2 O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn
my glory into shame? how long will ye love
vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

3 But know that the LORD hath set apart
him that is godly for himself: the LORD will
hear when I call unto him.

haunt the bosom of the guilty, and trouble their repose, his sleep is sweet to him, and he awakes refreshed and comforted, ready for the duties of the returning day, thankful for God's mercies, and, from what he has already received, encouraged to trust for what is yet to come. May I ever so lie down, O Lord, in peace and prayer; and when I wake up, may I be still with thee!

3. He expresses his confident trust in God. *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.* His enemies were on every side; his forces few; himself especially struck at, and for his blood they thirsted: but since faith has seen a covenant God, fear is silenced; and his prayers are the more earnest, for that his faith did not supersede his supplications, but encouraged them. And as God had so often smitten his enemies upon the cheek-bone, and broken the teeth of the ungodly, both covered them with reproach, and disabled them from hurting him, he doubted not but the same mercy would still follow him. The Son of David exercised still greater faith, and fearlessly met his more furious foes, confounded their devices, and turned them to their own destruction. By dying he destroyed death, and him that had the power of it, that is the devil: and in him, and by him, his faithful people also are made more than conquerors; while all the combined powers of Satan, the world, and sin, are kept from hurting them; and, as the answer to their repeated prayers, they behold the salvation of God.

4. The Psalmist gratefully ascribes the praise of all to God: *salvation of every kind, temporal or spiritual, belonging unto the Lord*; he is the great author and finisher of it, and to him alone the glory is due. And *thy blessing is upon thy people*: he is willing as he is able to save them to the uttermost; and his promises have bound him to those who cleave to him in simple faith, to help them in every time of need; for he hath said to such, *I will never leave nor forsake thee*: blessed then surely are the people who are in such a case.

P S A L. IV.

Title.] למנצח בנגינות *lamnatseach binegineth*. I. Concerning the authenticity of these titles in general, there is great doubt among commentators. It is the opinion of the very learned Bishop of Meaux, that they were both given and preserved by divine interposition, that their arguments and the writers of them might be known: "Nor can there be any reason for expunging them, since they are found in the text and all the versions, and have been thought worthy of explanation by Jewish as well as Christian commentators." 'Tis true there are many who take these titles in different senses; but I cannot find one ancient interpreter who doubts of their authority; whence we conclude," says he, "that though the titles as well as the other texts may have different inter-

pretations as well as various readings, yet those which are agreed to have been in the original books, were never called in question by any divine of antiquity." Mr. Fenwick has been at the pains to consider the Hebrew titles of the psalms at large; to him, therefore, we refer the reader curious on these subjects; Observing II. Concerning the musical instruments mentioned in several of these titles, that it is certain the Hebrews used in their sacred solemnities such as were either played upon by the breath, as the trumpet; or by striking, as the cymbal; or those which consisted of strings, which, from being touched or struck, were called *Neginoth*, and concerning some of which we shall have occasion to speak hereafter: though, for ourselves, we ingenuously own with Bishop Bossuet, that as these things are little necessary, so we are far from being certain or very solicitous about them. The most satisfactory account of them extant, that we know of, is Calmet's Dissertation upon the Hebrew Instruments, and the Univ. Hist. vol. iii. p. 194. We observe, III. On the title of the psalm before us, that the מנצח *menatseach*, chief musician, here mentioned, is generally supposed to have been the preceptor or chief singer in the temple worship; and that נגינות *Neginoth* consequently implies the stringed instruments to which the psalm was to be sung. Fenwick, however, who conceives that all the psalms immediately refer to Christ, has endeavoured to prove at large, that the words would be more properly rendered, *To him who giveth the victory, or causeth us to triumph in tribulations.* The versions vary extremely with respect to it. This psalm is thought to have been composed by David upon the same occasion with the former. From the 2d to the 6th verse he expostulates with his rebellious subjects, and admonishes them for their good: in the remainder of it he prays for God's assistance, and pathetically expresses his sure dependance upon him. See more on Psalm xxii. and lx.

Ver. 1. Hear me, when I call, O God, &c.] Or, Answer me, &c. O God of my righteousness! i. e. "Who art to do me right; to whom I apply for justice."

Ver. 2. Ye sons of men] The Hebrew בני אים *benei isb*, signifies *sons of man*; which may differ very much from our translation: For, does not the phrase *sons of man* imply all the human race; all the sons of Adam? And does not *sons of men* denote only persons of dignity and eminence? See Edwards's Style of the Holy Scripture, and Mudge. *Leasing* signifies *lies* or *falsehood*.

Ver. 3. Him that is godly] The word חסיד *chasid* in the original commonly signifies a pious, or charitable and beneficent person: but when it is spoken of man with reference to God, it denotes one that has received favour or mercy from him, and is the same with κεχαρισμενος, one who has found favour with God.

4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

6 *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of*

thy countenance upon us.

7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time *that* their corn and their wine increased.

8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

Ver. 4. Stand in awe, &c.] The LXX, Vulgate, Syriac, Ethiopian, and Arabic, render it, *Be ye angry, &c.*

Ver. 5. Sacrifices of righteousness] True sacrifices] Vitring. If. v. 2. p. 56. 829.

Ver. 6. There be many that say, &c.] *There be many* (the multitude, the generality of men, in almost every station) *that say, who will shew us any good?* i. e. "Who will heap honours upon us? Who will point out the way to wealth and luxury? Who will present new scenes of pleasure, that we may indulge our appetites, and give full scope to the roivings of a wanton fancy?" That this is the substance of what was intended by the sacred writer in this question, the words put in opposition to it, in which he expresses his own wiser sentiments, are an undeniable proof; *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* That what he here suggests is a fair representation of fact, experience loudly testifies; and that it is a false notion of human happiness, and a fatal error, reason plainly teaches; for what are honours, what are riches, what is sensual pleasure? They are light as vanity, fleeting as a bubble, thin and unsubstantial as air. The favour of God and his approbation is absolutely necessary to the happiness of mankind. The displeasure of our Maker includes in it the utmost distress and infamy; and his favour, every thing great, good, and honourable: so that the devout prayer of the Psalmist will be likewise the fervent and humble supplication of every wise and holy mind; *Lord, lift thou up, &c.* See Foster's Sermon. vol. iv.

Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance] For the understanding of this and several other passages in the Psalms, it must be remembered, that when Moses had prepared the ark, in which he deposited the tables of the covenant, the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle; and after this, wherever the ark rested, God always manifested his peculiar presence among his people, by a glorious visible appearance upon the mercy-seat; and this continued as long as Solomon's temple lasted. It is this which is always alluded to where mention is made in the Psalms of the *light of God's countenance, or his making his face to shine.* Now as this was a standing miraculous testimony of God's peculiar providence over the Jews; so those expressions of his *making his face to shine, his lifting up the light of his countenance, and the like, did in common use signify his being gracious unto them, and taking them under his immediate protection.* They are used in this sense, Numb. vi. 25. In like manner, the *hiding of God's face* meant the withdrawing of his favour and protection from them.

Ver. 7. More than in the time that their corn, &c.] i. e. "My gladness, my joy is as great as the joy of men in a plentiful harvest." The meaning of this verse seems, in the plainest and most obvious sense of it, to be nearly parallel to Isai. ix. 3. Grotius connects it with the preced-

ing verse in this manner: "If thou wilt lift the light of thy countenance upon us, O Lord, thou wilt put a greater gladness in my heart, than is generally expressed at a plentiful harvest of corn, or a great increase of wine."

REFLECTIONS.—1st. David opens this Psalm,

1. With earnest prayer to God. *Hear me when I call.* We have no demands on God for attention, nor can we make him our debtor by waiting upon him: it is a mercy, an unspeakable mercy, if he condescend to hear our prayers. *O God of my righteousness: My righteousness: God, who will do me right respecting my enemies; or, the indicator of my righteousness, which men traduce and malign; or the God on whom I depend for righteousness, renouncing all trust in myself. Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; many a time have I experienced thy kind interposition, therefore I am still encouraged to hope for the repetition of the same mercy.* And every true believer may adopt his words, acknowledging how often God has enlarged his heart, when straitened with temptations and beset with trials, and set his feet at liberty. *Note; (1.)* In every distress God is a sure refuge; let us fly to him. *(2.)* Past experience should engage present confidence.

2. He expostulates with his enemies, in order to their conviction and conversion: *O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame; as the chiefs of Israel, who joined his rebellious son, sought to do; and as the high-priest and people of the Jews did, when they reviled, insulted, and mocked the Lamb of God, and ridiculed the glory that he assumed as king of Israel, degrading him to the condition of a malefactor, and making him die the death of a slave. In like manner do wicked men seek to reproach the faithful, brand them as hypocrites and deceivers, and ridicule their holy peculiarities.*

3. He produces the reason why their attempts must be abortive. *Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself; which respects David himself, whose conduct God approved, and whose kingdom he would establish in spite of all his foes. Equally applicable is it to the Messiah, that elect in whom God's soul delighteth.*

4. He warns them of their danger, and the way of escaping it. *Stand in awe of the judgments of God, threatened against transgressors; and sin not, to provoke it against you.* Many versions read, *Be angry, and sin not,* according to the apostle, Eph. iv. 26. There is an anger not sinful, when it is directed against the evils that we see in ourselves and others, and leads us to zeal for their good, and God's glory. *Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.* Consider your ways, seriously examine them by the rule of God's laws; search out your manifold offences; bring forth the awful sentence, which is the ap-

P S A L M V.

David prayeth, and professeth his study in prayer. God favoureth not the wicked. David, professing his faith, prayeth unto God to guide him, to destroy his enemies, and to preserve the godly.

To the chief musician upon Nehiloth.

A Psalm of David.

GIVE ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

2 Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my

King and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

3 My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.

5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak leaf-

pointed wages of sin, and suffer no avocation to divert your thoughts from this important subject: retire to your closet often; and let conscience faithfully do her office; that, self-condemned, and humbled under the sense of sin, your hearts may be laid in the dust, to seek mercy with an offended God. Then offer unto God the sacrifices of righteousness: the sacrifice of God's appointment, which pointed to the atoning blood of the great Redeemer; and put your trust in the Lord, renouncing yourself as a vile sinner, and looking for the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, as your only soul-supporting hope: and this will produce sacrifices of praise to God for redeeming grace, with which he has declared himself to be well-pleased. Thus may all the evil that the sinner fears be averted, and the felicity of God's faithful people become his happy portion. *O that men were wise, that they understood these things!*

2dly, Having exhorted men to seek the favour of a gracious God, David proceeds to shew the excellency of his regard beyond every earthly acquisition.

1. *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?* foolish worldlings, who place their chief happiness in the perishing enjoyments of present vanities; seeking their portion on earth, and grasping at this shadow, instead of God, the only author of true and abiding joy. *Note;* (1.) Sense governs the majority of mankind, and their pursuits after happiness scarcely rise to objects higher than those which the beasts enjoy in common with them. (2.) They who, with a rational and immortal soul, seek their rest in sublunary enjoyments, must ever, like the prodigal son, find them as husks, incapable of satisfying their hunger. (3.) They who take up with their portion in time, can have none in eternity.

2. The Psalmist, and all whose hearts, like his, divine grace has wrought upon, seek a nobler and more satisfying possession. *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us;* give us a sense of thy favour, the comforts of thy Spirit, and the experience of thy love shed abroad in our hearts: this is the only satisfying portion that an immortal soul can enjoy; and all the wealth of the world, compared with this, is dung and loss. *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.* A worldly man exults to see his barns full, and his vats overflow with wine: but how much greater the joy, to experience the riches of Divine grace, and to be filled with all the fulness of God! *Note;* They are woefully mistaken, who count God's servants unhappy, and the ways of godliness melancholy: out of them there is no true joy, and the end of all other mirth is heaviness.

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3. With this gladness of heart, which a sense of the Divine favour ministered, he forgot his troubles, and rested in peace and comfort. *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep:* no fears shall disturb, or disappointment break my rest; if thou art with me, I have all that heart can wish: *for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.* Though other refuge I have none, the shadow of thy wings is sufficient security; my soul rests in thy love, my body under thy care, and both are perfectly safe. *Note;* Every true believer may with delight adopt these expressions of dependence upon God: he can sleep with peace on his bed, for God is there; he can lay with confidence his body in the dust, and sleep the sleep of death; for even in the grave he is safe: and, having committed his all into the hands of a faithful guardian, he is assured, that, whether for time or eternity, all is well.

P S A L M V.

Title.] *למנצח אל הנחילות lamnafeach el bannechiloth-*
To the Master } of the successive voices. This psalm was
Prefect }
indited by David, on account of his many enemies; and in particular, as it is supposed, of Achitophel. He represents himself in it as performing his morning devotions in the temple, and praying for protection against his enemies; whose falsehood and malice he describes; and in the end expresses his confidence in God's favour. *נחילות Nechiloth* is by many of the commentators supposed to express those wind instruments which were used in the temple service. *Aquila, Symmachus,* and several other of the versions, render the words, upon *Nehiloth*—Concerning her who obtaineth the inheritance: Improving upon whom, Fenwick renders the whole title, *To him who giveth the victory; the God of the inheritance;* i. e. "To Christ; who gave the Jews possession of the earthly Canaan, and who will bring all his faithful servants to his heavenly kingdom, that blessed lot of our inheritance." See the note on the title of the former psalm.

Ver. 1. My meditation] My sighing.

Ver. 2. Hearken, &c.] Attend unto the voice of my supplication.

Ver. 4. Neither shall evil dwell] Neither shall the wicked sojourn. Fenwick understands this of the evil one, by way of eminence; the devil; as by the righteous or Just One, in the 12th verse, he supposes the Messiah to be denoted.

Ver. 5. The foolish shall not stand] Or, The mad shall not stand before thine eyes.

Ver. 6. The bloody—man] The man of blood, is generally understood to be a man guilty of murder, or disposed to be

be

ing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

7 But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: *and* in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

8 Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

9 For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part *is* very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.

10 Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.

11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as *with* a shield.

be so; but, from the use of that word in Scripture, he seems to be a man whose blood, for any capital crime, is due to justice; *on whom is blood, or the debt of blood*, as it is expressed in Lev. ἐνοχῶ θανάτω, i. e. a man abandoned to the most capital and flagitious crimes. Mudge.

Ver. 8. *Make thy way straight, &c.*] *Make thy way plain before me*; i. e. "That I may walk on it evenly and smoothly, without stumbling, which mine enemies would gladly take hold of." See Psal. cxliii. 10.

Ver. 9. *Very wickedness*] The word rendered *wickedness*, seems to have a meaning derived from the sound; קִוָּבָה *kovab*; any thing upon which we pronounce woe; evil of any kind, natural or moral. "Their inward part is all woeful, execrable stuff or rottenness, which sends forth nauseous steams through the throat, as though it were a sepulchre open." See Mudge.

Ver. 10. *Destroy thou them*] We have heretofore observed, that imprecatory passages of this kind may all be rendered in the future; which would obviate many objections: *Thou wilt destroy them, O God; they shall fall, &c.*

Ver. 11. *That love thy name*] The name of a person or a thing is a Hebraism, whereby the person or thing is expressed. The propriety of this mode of speaking will appear stronger from the religion of names, as delivered by the Egyptians, and derived from them to the neighbouring states. The names of their tutelary deities were not only names of distinction, but likewise names of honour. The Deity, when asked his name by Moses, complied with this principle or custom, and assumed the name of JEHOVAH, by which he was considered as the peculiar tutelary deity of the Israelites. The *love of his name*, therefore, implying in it an abhorrence of idolatry, a strong confidence in him as their tutelary Deity, and a tacit obligation of obedience to his laws, is generally used in the Old Testament to express a religious conduct; and the frequent use of the word *name*, instead of the express mention of the divine person, will from hence appear to be no expletive, but to be consistent with the veneration which all nations had for the names of their deities, when used as terms of honour. See Div. Leg. vol. ii. *Because thou defendest them*, in the foregoing clause, may be rendered, *And thou shalt overshadow them*.

Ver. 12. *For thou, Lord, wilt bless*] *Yes, thou, Lord, wilt bless*; Mudge: who observes, that David seems here to receive the signal that he had been looking for. The word שָׁמַח *shannah*, rendered a *shield*, agreeably to its other signifi-

cations, must mean some pointed weapon, as a *spear*. So that the clause should be rendered, *Thou wilt encircle him with favour, as with a fence of spears*; as a prince is encircled with spears or spearmen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. The cries of his people are ever pleasing to the ears of the God of Sabaoth, and he will hear and help them. This David knew, and therefore lifts up his heart and voice to God. *Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation*. His lips were not hasty to speak; he first deeply pondered his wants, and then he uttered his petition. *Hearken unto the voice of my cry*; as his distress was urgent, his importunity was great. *Note*; Fervour is the life of prayer; cold and negligent requests shew a heart dead to God. The arguments that he uses, as a plea for being heard, are,

1. The relation in which he stood to God. *My King, and my God*; thou art not only all-sufficient to help me, as the almighty King and eternal God, but in a tender and gracious sense bound to help me, as I am thy subject, and servant, and child in the Beloved. *Note*; A believing view of God as our God, is a great encouragement to pray.

2. The constant service that he resolved to pay him. *For unto thee will I pray*, as the only object of my worship, and with ceaseless attendance. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord*: no sooner shall my eyes behold the returning light, than early will I offer unto thee the grateful acknowledgment of protection received, and put my body and soul anew under thy care, to be kept from the dangers of the day. *Note*; The morning is a time peculiarly fit to spend with God in prayer, and our first moments should ever be consecrated to the service of that God who wakeneth us morning by morning. *In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up, or out*. As when a messenger is dispatched on some important errand, the eye is eager to catch the distant glimpse of his return; so does the soul, that sends to heaven its supplications and prayers, wait with earnestness the returning answer of peace. For want of this, how many prayers become fruitless, because formal!

3. He mentions God's purity, as a foundation of his hope, conscious of his own simplicity, and convinced of the wickedness of his troublers. *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee*.

P S A L. VI.

David's complaint in his sickness: by faith he triumphs over his enemies.

To the chief musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith.

A Psalm of David.

O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.

3 My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O

LORD, how long?

4 Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.

5 For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

6 I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.

7 Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

8 Depart from me, all ye workers of ini-

thee. Sin is the abominable thing that God hates; it is contrary to his nature, and therefore all who love, delight in, and serve sin, must be the objects of his abhorrence. *The foolish*, or wicked, (for wickedness is the height of folly,) *shall not stand in thy fight*, shall be unable to bear his presence in the day of judgment, driven out with indignation, saying, *Depart ye cursed, &c. Thou hatest all workers of iniquity*; not all that have been workers of it; for when we were yet sinners, God commended his love towards us, and sent his Son to die for the ungodly: but all who, rejecting the grace of a Redeemer, persist in their impenitence, and work iniquity as their practice and delight, these the holy God hates. *Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing, or a lie*; all the forgers and propagators of false reports to hurt and defame. *The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man*, the implacable and unmerciful. These are the characters marked for vengeance, not only in David's day, but in every age and place. Such enemies of Christ and his people, foolish, wicked, malicious, false, blood-thirsty men, shall be destroyed with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. Lord, gather not my soul with these sinners!

2dly, Having described the miserable ways and end of the ungodly, we have David's resolution and prayer, that he may take a different course. *But as for me, I will come into thy house, to worship there*, as one of thy devoted servants, and publicly to make profession of my bounden duty; not that I am worthy to open my polluted lips, or to mention my worthless service; but *in the multitude of thy mercy*, this being the only ground of a sinner's confidence towards God, the mercy revealed in a covenant of grace through Jesus Christ: *and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple*; with reverence adoring the eternal Majesty who is so greatly to be feared; careful to observe his instituted ordinances, as well as drawing near through the divinely-appointed medium, the great Mediator between God and man, whom the temple and all its service pre-figured.

P S A L. VI.

Title. על השמינית *al hashsheminith. Upon Sheminith*] Some render it, *Upon the eighth*. The *Sheminith* is generally supposed to have been a harp of eight strings. It is so rendered by the Chaldee. Fenwick renders it, *on the*

unction; the anointing of the Holy Spirit. See his Hebrew Titles, p. 18. It is probable, that David composed this psalm upon his recovery from some great sickness. He complains in it of some grievous disorder, heightened by the malicious joy of his enemies, from which he prays to be relieved; and in a fiducial dependance that his prayer will be heard, he triumphs in the disappointment of his enemies.

Ver. 2. My bones are vexed] *Bones, reins, inward parts*, often in scripture signify the same as *heart, soul, thought*; see Psal. xxxv. 10. where *bones* probably signify the same as here.

Ver. 3. But thou, O Lord, how long?] There seems to be an ellipsis here, which is thus supplied by the Chaldee paraphrast; *How long wilt thou defer to give me some refreshment?* In the version of our liturgy it is: *But, Lord, how long wilt thou punish me?*

Ver. 5. In death there is no remembrance of thee] This is meant only of the bodies of persons deceased, not of their souls; which still survive, and do not sleep till the resurrection, as some have vainly imagined; and yet even their souls are incapable of praising God in his church upon earth, of propagating his worship, or of exciting others to piety by their example. Good men, therefore, have often desired to have their lives prolonged, only that they might be capable of worshipping God, and of fully executing his will in this world, in order, as the Hebrews speak, to increase the reward of their souls in the world to come. See Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19. and Fenton on the Psalms.

Ver. 7. Mine eye, &c.] *Mine eye is fretted } with indignation; it is grown old because of all my oppressors.* Mr. Mudge observes, that the original word עתקה *atkah*, rendered *waxeth old*, signifies to be *fixed, stiffened, set in one's head*. According to him, it never implies *age*, in the sense of decay, but *duration* only; and means *hard, stiff, firm, durable*. Parkhurst, however, rather thinks, that its proper meaning is to *sink, or be sunk with grief*. So Dryden,

His eye balls in their hollow sockets sink.

Ver. 8. Iniquity] The original word properly signifies *vanity or falsehood*; and *iniquity* only as it is *vanity*; when it is to be treated with contempt. *They who practise, or employ themselves in vanity*, are, I believe, always in the meaning

quity: for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.

9 The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.

10 Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return *and* be ashamed suddenly.

meaning of the Psalmist, they who practise idol superstitions, which are all a system of vanity. David, therefore, here bids them to leave him; *Depart from me*; ver. 9. *Jehovah is my God; He will receive my prayer*; ver. 10. *All mine enemies shall be put to shame, and be in the greatest disorder; they shall be turned back, and put to shame suddenly.* See Mudge and Houbigant.

REFLECTIONS.—1. David represents his moving case to the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation. *I am weak, worn down with pining sickness; my bones are vexed with tormenting pain; and, above all my other griefs, my soul is also sore vexed,* the heaviest burden under which I groan. *Note*; (1.) The greatest kings, and the holiest saints of God, are equally exposed with others to the sufferings of humanity. (2.) Bodily sickness is doubly afflictive, when attended with a wounded spirit. (3.) Whatever our burdens are, it is our wisdom and only relief to cast them on the Lord.

2. His sorrows were, as his anguish, great: his head was waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, which ran down day and night; and when the source was exhausted, and the dry eye-ball stiffened in the socket, his groaning continued, till, weary and exhausted with grief, he was ready to pine away. *Note*; (1.) They who have ever felt a conscience wounded with the sense of sin, are no strangers to the Psalmist's tears. (2.) When our sin has been great, our sorrow should be great also.

3. He importunately cried for relief at the hands of his merciful God. *Rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure*: however heavily thou art pleased to lay thine hand upon me, let it be a father's rod, and not in wrath, but for correction: all my other anguish I can bear, but thy displeasure is intolerable. *Have mercy upon me, forgive all that I have done amiss; heal me, the pain and sickness of my body, but much more the wounds of my soul with the precious balm of thy grace. Lord, how long shall I cry before thou hearest me? Return*; thy absence is more than I can bear; lift up the light of thy countenance to cheer my disconsolate heart. *Deliver my soul from its sorrow, and all those enemies spiritual and temporal who long for my destruction. O save me, for thou alone, Lord, art able to help in this my time of greatest need.* I own, I have no title to demand, no desert to plead, but *for thy mercies' sake*, as an act of unmerited grace, and undeserved favour.

4. He strengthens his requests with an argument drawn from God's glory: *In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks? I cannot there offer thee praise for my recovery, or encourage others by my experi-*

P S A L. VII.

David prayeth against the malice of his enemies, professing his innocency. By faith he seeth his defence, and their destruction.

Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.

O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:

ence to trust upon thee. I can there no more serve thee in my generation, or lead the song of worship in thy sanctuary. *Note*; Though to depart and be with Christ is far better; yet, for God's glory, and the church's good, the saints of God who are ripest for heaven may desire to live.

5. While he is speaking, God hears and answers; and therefore, ere he rises from his knees, the language of triumphant faith breaks forth, and, as the sun dispels the darkness, light and gladness return to his afflicted soul.

[1.] He is divinely assured, that his prayers and tears had not been disregarded; that his requests are granted; and still a throne of grace open for every farther petition, with full confidence of success: *the Lord hath heard my present, and will receive my future prayer.*

[2.] He bids the workers of iniquity depart, confounded while they beheld the happy change: or he expresses his own holy purpose to keep himself henceforth from the ways of the destroyer, and to have no fellowship with the ungodly.

[3.] He predicts the dreadful and sudden destruction of those who troubled and triumphed over him in his distress. Shame at their disappointment, and vexation at his prosperity, shall cover them: they shall return from persecuting him, confounded at his deliverance, so unlike what they looked for, and sudden judgment overtake them in this world, or everlasting confusion be their portion in the world to come. *Note*; (1.) The devices of the enemies of God's people, spiritual and temporal, shall be surely disappointed. (2.) They who return not now to God in penitence, must shortly depart from him into everlasting burnings.

P S A L. VII.

Title. שִׁגְיֹן לְדָוִד *Shiggaion ledavid. Shiggaion of David*; *Canticum erraticum.* Houbigant. *A wandering song*, says Parkhurst, after Fenwick; a song of *wanderings*, probably composed by David in his wandering, when persecuted by Saul and his servants; in which the Psalmist stands as a type of Christ and his church, persecuted by Satan and his adherents. Who this *Cush* was, we are nowhere told, if he be not the same with Shimei. He seems by the 3d and 4th verses to have reproached David, much in the same manner as Shimei did, with his ingratitude to Saul. Some are of opinion, that by *Cush*, or *Cis*, is meant Saul himself, the son of *Cis*: and they have some countenance for their conjecture from the title of the Chaldee; "The interpretation of an ode of David, which he sung before the Lord, when he delivered a poem upon the death of Saul, the son of *Cis*, who was

2 Left he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while *there is* none to deliver.

3 O LORD my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;

4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:)

5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.

6 Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment *that* thou hast commanded.

7 So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high.

8 The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity *that is* in me.

9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

10 My defence *is* of God, which saveth the upright in heart.

11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

12 If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.

13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

14 Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

was of the tribe of Benjamin." The full and strong terms, however, in which the person speaking in this psalm declares his innocence, and indeed the whole subject matter of it, seems to assure us, that, on whatever occasion David wrote it, the Holy Spirit led him to use words which, in their full and most proper sense, must have been designed for the mouth of him who was perfectly righteous, and in whose *hands* there was never any iniquity. He begins the psalm with praying for deliverance from his enemies who pursued him; one more eminently beyond others, we may imagine, from his frequently recurring to the singular number: He then protests his innocence, and proceeds to pray God to do justice to the world and himself; supposes him sitting in judgment, ver. 8. and petitions him, as he is sitting, to judge impartially both good and bad. Accordingly he does so from ver. 9. to 13. His enemy is defeated and falls into his own snare; 14—16. upon which he praises God for this act of justice.

Ver. 2. *Left he tear my soul*] The singular here evidently proves that one particular enemy is referred to; Fenwick supposes it to mean the great enemy and accuser, whose agents and tools wicked men are. *Soul* sometimes signifies *life* itself, of which it is the principle; and sometimes it implies the *person* himself; both which senses are agreeable to this place.

Ver. 4. *If I have rewarded evil, &c.*] Or, *If I have repayed [evil] to him who dealt ill with me; or if I have despoiled him, who without cause was my enemy.* The verse, according to our translation, points strongly to the case where David saved Saul from being killed.

Ver. 6. *Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, &c.*] This supposes that God had determined that an exact and solemn judgment should one time or other pass upon the world; and he prays him to awake and arouse himself up to execute it.

Ver. 7. *For their sakes therefore*] *For that [cause] therefore.* The words, *compass thee about*, allude to the Jewish rite of

going round the temple and altar in time of divine worship. So that to *compass about*, in a triumphant and joyful procession, means, to *adore, worship, and praise God.* So Psalm xxvi. 6. *I will wash mine hands in innocency, and so will I compass, or go round thine altar.* See Spencer de Leg. Heb. tom. ii.

Ver. 8. *According to my righteousness*] i. e. Referring to David, "*My innocence, with respect to him, who persecutes me without cause.*" See the 3d and 4th verses. In the same sense David calls himself the *just* or *righteous*, in the next verse; where the *reins* signify the same thing with the *heart*; but the sacred writers usually join these two words together, in describing the knowledge which God has of our inward motions and thoughts, in order to express themselves with the greater force, and the better to denote that God penetrates into our most secret sentiments.

Ver. 11. *God judgeth, &c.*] *God is a righteous judge, and a God who avengeth every day.*

Ver. 12. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword*] *Since he will not turn back, he is whetting his sword.* i. e. "*Since this particular enemy of David's will not turn, &c.*" The Psalmist is supposed to see God preparing instruments of vengeance against his pursuers, since they would not turn from pursuing him, nor cease to lay snares for his life.

Ver. 13. *He ordaineth his arrows, &c.*] *He will make his* { *arrows to pursue.*
 { *pursuing arrows.*

Ver. 14. *Behold, he travaileth, &c.*] This verse is by some expositors more clearly rendered thus: *Behold he is travelling with his iniquity; for he had conceived mischief, and therefore he will bring forth falsehood.* The sense is, that all his wicked designs and endeavours would be frustrated: *He will bring forth falsehood:* i. e. "*He will be so far from succeeding in what he undertook, that it will but miserably deceive him in the end, and turn to his own confusion.*" See Prov. xi. 18.

Ver.

15 He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made.

16 His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

17 I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.

Ver. 15. He made a pit, &c.] This is a proverbial mode of speech often used in Scripture: it is taken from pits which are digged and then covered with the leaves of trees, or some such unstable materials, either to make men fall into them, as in the time of war; or else wild beasts, who are hunted into them.

REFLECTIONS.—1. This Psalm opens with David's professed dependance upon God. *O Lord, my God*, in whom I have a sure interest, and who art bound to me in the tenderest relation, *in thee do I put my trust*, at all times, and under all difficulties. *Note;* They who continue thus to make God their refuge, can never be moved.

2. He cries to God to save him from the malice of his persecutors; strong and cruel as a lion, they threatened to tear him in pieces; and he was without help in himself, or a friend to protect him. *Note;* When we are weak, then are we strong; the farther all human dependance is removed, the more shall we be led to rely on God alone.

3. He appeals to God for the innocence that there was in him respecting the things laid to his charge. *Note;* (1.) It is an unspeakable comfort, under the world's malignant aspersions, to be conscious of our own innocence. (2.) However wicked men may strive to blacken us, we have a God to appeal to, the protector of the injured; and he will shortly make our righteousness appear as the light, and our just dealings as the noon-day.

4. Having lodged his appeal with God, he looks up to him as the righteous judge.

5. He prays, *O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end*, either by their conversion, and forsaking their evil ways, or by the final coming of that blessed kingdom, where sin can never enter: *but establish the just*, or the righteous man, meaning himself, and including every believer who is justified by faith in Christ, and made righteous by the Spirit of grace. He begs that God would establish them in every divine and gracious disposition; that they may be strengthened with might in the inner man, and enabled to persevere unshaken: and in confidence of this he rests satisfied; *for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins*, discovers his enemies through every veil of hypocrisy, and knoweth them that are his; though compassed with infirmity, and is convinced of their simplicity and godly sincerity before him. *Note;* It is a blessed thing when we can with comfort regard the righteous God as the searcher of hearts.

6. Having committed his cause to God, he concludes,

(1.) His deliverance sure. *My defence*, says he, *is of God*, or, *my shield is of God*: he will cover me as safely as under a shield from the arrows of my enemies: *which*

P S A L. VIII.

God's glory is magnified by his works, and by his love to man.

To the chief musician upon Gittith.

A Psalm of David.

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

saveth the upright; they are sure of his protection; and *God judgeth the righteous*, is a righteous judge; and therefore they who approve themselves before him, may be assured that he will vindicate them from every accusation. *Note;* Out of God's favour there is no safety; in it, no danger.

(2.) His enemies' destruction is certain, unless they repent: for *God is angry with the wicked every day*, he marks their continual provocations, and especially that radical enmity of heart, which is ever working within, to bring forth fruit unto death. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword:* God delighteth not in the death of a sinner; however great his provocations, when he returns to God, God will turn from the fierceness of his wrath against him. How should such goodness lead us to repentance! But, if he persists, his ruin lies at his own door; he has rejected his own mercies, and must perish in his iniquity. God's glittering sword is whetting for judgment; the arrow of death is fitting to the string; and all his instruments of vengeance ready; and shall we despise the long-suffering of our God? Sinner, tremble at thy aggravated guilt, and seize the moment which mercy prolongs, lest slighted patience provoke implacable vengeance. Let the persecutors of God's people especially be warned; on them he will empty his quiver.

(3.) All the mischievous devices of the sinner are vain, and can end but in his own ruin: the conceptions of his devilish wisdom will prove abortive; into the pit that he digged for others, himself shall fall; and all the evils which he meditated against the innocent recoil upon his own head, and overwhelm him with misery insupportable.

(4.) David concludes with his grateful tribute of praise due for these righteous acts of the Lord. Every instance of such divine interposition shall minister to him constant matter for a song of thanksgiving to the Lord most High. *Note;* They who are kept ever trusting, will be ever praising.

P S A L. VIII.

Title. Gittith.] lamnatseach al haggittith למנצח על הנתיח
The word *נתיח gittith*, signifies *wine-presses*; *Amos*, the LXX. As to what is meant by these *wine-presses*, says Houbigant, we are utterly ignorant. Some interpreters, however, think that a musical instrument brought from *Gath* is implied; for the Chaldee renders it, "On the harp which David brought from Gath." And, agreeably hereto, this triumphal Psalm is thought to have been composed by David upon his victory over Goliath. See Dr. Hammond's first note upon it. It relates, however, more eminently to our Blessed Saviour's victorious resurrection from the grave, and his triumphal ascension into heaven, whereby our hu-

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2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

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 a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

man nature was exalted above all the creatures in the world. In this view of it, Fenwick supposes that *Gittith* refers to Christ suffering, and to his consequent trampling his enemies in the wine-press of God's wrath. Comp. Isa. lxiii. 1. 3.

Ver. 2. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, &c.] The first and most natural signification of these words is an allusion to the case of David himself; who, in comparison of Goliath, was but a mere child; and God's enabling him to gain a complete victory over this gigantic champion, was not only a proper punishment for his defiance of the armies of the living God, but likewise sufficient to make the whole army of the Philistines adore the omnipotence of the God of Israel in reverential silence. Our Saviour applies it to himself, Matt. xxi. 16., and it may with great propriety be applied to the first preachers of the Gospel; who, though ignorant, illiterate, and void either of power or interest, triumphed over the wisdom of the wise, and put to silence the cavils of the subtle: though some imagine that this quotation was applied by Christ to children, literally such; yet it is plain, that the Scribes and Pharisees were not offended so much at the people, as at their expressions: *When they cried Hosanna to the Son of David, they were displeased, and said unto Jesus, Hearest thou what these say?* i. e. "How they ascribe the power of salvation to thee, who art but a mere man? Is that acclamation, *Hosanna*, which signifies *save now*, and is often used in our addresses to God, fit to be given to thee?" Our Saviour replies, "Yes: for *have ye not read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength?* and though, in this low and abject state, I appear as a man, and seem, in my present condition, to be as incapable of such power as a sucking child is of the greatest enterprise; yet am I to save my faithful disciples, and to subdue the enemies of my mission, according to the sense of that prophetic passage." Though the Evangelist cites these verses according to the Septuagint version, *Thou hast perfected praise*; yet it is most probable that our Saviour used the Hebrew phrase, which renders the sense clearer; and, though the persons crying *Hosanna* are called *children* in our version, yet it is most likely that they were grown persons; for they were the persons or multitude who conducted Jesus to Jerusalem. The Greek word which we render *children*, is generally applied to menial servants of all ages; and in Matt. xiv. 2. it is applied to Herod's courtiers, or servants. See Mede's Discourses, and 2 Kings, ii. 23.

Ver. 4. What is man — and the son of man?] Bishop Patrick, in his preface to the Paraphrase on the Psalms, has made a remark which we here subjoin, as it gives light to this, and several other passages of Scripture: "The son of

man, and the sons of men, (says he,) are phrases which often occur, and which in Scripture-language seem to belong to princes, and sometimes the greatest of princes; see Pf. lxxx. 17 where it signifies Hezekiah; Pf. cxlvi. 2. where it signifies any prince, however great in dignity, or eminent in power: so Pf. lviii. 1. the counsellors of Saul are called the *sons of men*. The original of this language, I conceive, is to be drawn from the common manner of speech among the Hebrews, who called the chief of any kind by the whole kind. So they call man *creature*, Mark, xvi. 15. because he is the prime creature here below: so a king, or eminent person, they call *the son of man*, because he is the prime, or chief among the *sons of men*: hence we may learn what to understand by that title which the Blessed Saviour so often gives himself; *The Son of Man*, or rather, *That Son of Man*: i. e. the *Messiah*, the Lord's Anointed; that great prince, whom God promised to send into the world."

Ver. 5. Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels] *Him*, that is, the Son of Man, spoken of in the preceding verse. This, as well as the following verse, is applied by the apostle to the Hebrews to our Saviour, chap. ii. 7. where we shall enlarge upon it: see also 1 Cor. xv. 27. Instead of *a little lower*, &c. some would render the Hebrew word, *טַיִם* meat, for *a little time lower than the angels*: for, say they, as it is Jesus Christ who is here treated of, and as the words relate to the time of his abasement, we cannot say that he was made but a little lower than the angels, since he then appeared under the form of a servant, and was a worm rather than a man; but he was so only for a little time. See Philip. ii. 6—8.

Ver. 6. Thou madest him to have dominion] As these words, and those which follow, are not here spoken of man, till after it is said that God had abased and humbled him; and man having not been established king and ruler of the world, after having degraded himself by his sin, but, on the contrary, having then lost all the right which before this he had over the other creatures; the advancement here spoken of can have no relation to him. Besides, under these general terms, *the works of his hands*, the angels being also comprehended, as appears from Heb. i. 4, 5. these words can relate only to JESUS CHRIST. It should be particularly observed, that in the description which the prophet here gives, ver. 7, 8. of the empire of the second Adam, he has borrowed the ideas and expressions of the dominion which God gave to the first Adam, Gen. i. 28.; much after the same manner that the prophets have usually borrowed the terms and ideas of the Jewish church in their times, whereby to describe the Christian church. See Isa. xix. 18. 21. lxii. 9. Mal. i. 11.

REFLEC-

7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field ;

8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth !

P S A L. IX.

David praiseth God for executing of judgment : he inciteth others to praise him : he prayeth that he may have cause to praise him.

To the chief musician upon Muth-labben.

A Psalm of David.

I WILL praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart ; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, This Psalm opens with the Psalmist's high admiration of the glory of God : *O Lord our Lord.* It is a pleasing task to contemplate the divine excellencies, and his wondrous works, when we can claim an interest in him, as our God ; for *then all things are ours.* How excellent is thy name in all the earth ! bright is the display of glory which appears in all the works of creation and providence throughout the earth ; but brighter far this glory shines in the eternal world, where God has fixed his radiant throne, and angels and archangels adore him, yet cannot reach his praise, who hath set his glory above the heavens. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength :* by the weak things of this world, such as were the apostles and preachers of the Gospel, whom men despised as babes and sucklings, has God sent forth his mighty word, which is the power of God unto salvation ; *because of thine enemies ;* either to confound them, as in the Temple ; or to convert them, when, unable to resist the powerful evidence, they should fall down and give glory to God. *That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger, or, cause him to cease ;* that is to say, the power of Satan, and his kingdom upon earth. *Note ;* (1.) The kingdom of Christ shall finally be triumphant, however despicable its professors may now appear in the eyes of a carnal world. (2.) The weaker and more helpless we are before our spiritual foes, the more is God's glory exalted in bruising Satan under our feet, and making us, through faith, more than conquerors.

2dly, The great condescensions of the Divine Grace to man still further awaken the Psalmist's wonder, love, and praise ; especially the glories of the man Christ Jesus, so highly exalted for us men, and for our salvation.

When I consider thy heavens, that stupendous frame, the work of thy fingers, so curiously formed, so astonishingly magnificent ; the moon and the stars, with all the various bodies, which with such order revolve in their several spheres ; which thou hast ordained, or prepared, suited and admirably disposed to answer the uses for which they were intended ; what is man, וְאִישׁ אֶנְשִׁי, miserable man, that thou art mindful of him ? either man in general, to whom, in some sense, all that is said may be applicable ; for whose benefit the heavens are spread abroad, the luminaries shine ; in nature, next to angelical ; in dignity, the head of this lower world ; to whom all creatures are put in subjection, and for whose support, use, and comfort, they are given. Well might this awaken our admiration, and make us astonished at the greatness of the gift ; but greater far is the glory put upon man, and to which the apostle, Heb. ii. 6. applies these words. God has been so mindful of man as to take the human nature into an union with the

divine, in the person of his own Son, who now is become the son of man ; and thou wisest him with the most unbounded favour and regard, giving the Spirit without measure unto him, and anointing him with the oil of gladness above his fellows. *For thou hast made him a little lower than the Elohim ;* by the assumption of the human nature, Christ is inferior to the Father as touching his manhood ; or angels, as the apostle interprets the word, Christ having taken that nature, which in excellence is inferior to the evangelical, particularly as subject to death and misery : a little, not so much respecting the degree as the duration ; but a little while, that is to say, during the days of his humiliation, especially when he lay in the grave, and experienced that lowest abatement of humanity. *Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, by raising him from the dead, and setting him on the mediatorial throne on high. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, all things are committed into his hand, in heaven and in earth ; and he is above all, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Thou hast put all things under his feet, not only the affairs of this sublunary world, and the inferior creatures here specified, but angels in heaven, and devils in hell, all own his sovereign sway ; and men, whether his loyal subjects who enjoy his protection, or his enemies who must lick the dust.* Such an exaltation of our divine Lord fills the heart with the deepest acknowledgment to that gracious God, who thus visited us in our low estate, and, above all other manifestations of his glory and grace, excites our highest admiration. *O Lord, our Lord, now in the incarnate Jesus especially related to us, how excellent is thy name in all the earth !* *Note ;* (1.) The more we behold of the visible glories around us, the more should our hearts be led to the contemplation of the glorious Author. (2.) Redemption will ever furnish sources of wonder and praise. Indeed, the more we search, the more shall we find this ocean unfathomable ; and, after endless ages spent in the delightful task, still cry, O the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of love that passeth knowledge !

P S A L. IX.

Title. Upon Muth-labben.] על מות לבן al muth labben. Upon the death of the champion. Thus also the Chaldee renders it : " To be sung on occasion of the death of the man who went forth from the camp." And accordingly many have supposed that the Psalm relates to that history of Goliath, which we have in 1 Sam. xvii. However, all that we have certain about it is, that it was occasioned by some great distress, from which it pleased God to deliver David. Fenwick renders the title, " To him that giveth the victory, concerning things secret, to the Son ;" and some of the

2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High.

3 When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou sattest in the throne judging right.

5 Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

6 O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.

7 But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.

8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.

12 When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

13 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble *which I suffer* of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:

14 That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.

15 The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that they made*: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.

16 The LORD is known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.

18 For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall *not* perish for ever.

19 Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail; let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

20 Put them in fear, O LORD: *that* the nations may know themselves *to be but men*. Selah.

versions are favourable to this interpretation. The LXX, Ethiopic, and Vulgate, read, "For the secret things, or "mysteries of the Son." The Arabic intitles it, "Concerning the mysteries of the Son;" and then adds, "in relation to the glory of Christ, and his resurrection and kingdom, and the destruction of all the disobedient." St. Jerome says, that this Psalm points at the overthrow and final destruction of Antichrist.

Ver. 3. When mine enemies are turned back, &c.] Because mine enemies are turned back; they stumbled and perished at thy presence. Mudge and Houbigant.

Ver. 6. O thou enemy, &c.] As for the enemy, they are quite destroyed; everlasting desolations: their cities thou hast extirpated; their memory, as well as themselves, is annihilated. Mudge. There is more beauty in supposing David here to apostrophize his enemies: O thou enemy! the destructions which thou, boasting, hast threatened to my people, are come to a perpetual end; upon which we may suppose him immediately to return to God in triumph, Yes, thou hast destroyed their cities; their memorial is perished with them.

Ver. 12. When he maketh inquisition for blood] To make inquisition for blood, as we hinted on Pf. v. is not to inquire after blood spilled, but to sit as inquisitor or judge on all capital crimes, where the blood of the offender is due to justice. Them, refers to the humble or afflicted, who follow

after, and whose cry or supplication is contained in the two next verses.

Ver. 14. The daughter of Zion] The word בת bath, daughter, applied to a city or nation, implies the inhabitants of it; the city being, as it were, the parent from whence they sprung. See Isai. xxxvii. 22.

Ver. 15. The heathen are sunk down in the pit, &c.] This makes a fine break in the poem; and David so often uses this method, that it will be sufficient to have hinted it once. You see his imagination is warmed to that degree, that he seems already to behold the destruction of his foes, and, in a sort of prophetic rapture, proceeds to describe their destiny.

Ver. 16. Higgaion] See the note on Pf. iii. 2.

Ver. 17. Be turned into hell] The word rendered hell in this verse, does not mean absolutely the state of the damned, but only the שואל sheol, or state of departed souls; the grave, or place of the dead. This we may learn in the place before us, from the following verse; for the wicked were to be turned into the grave for the deliverance of the poor. In this sense, the word is to be understood in the Apostles' Creed, and throughout the Psalms.

Ver. 20. To be but men] Fenwick renders this verse:

Let them a guide and teacher have, O Lord!
Their helpless state make thou the nations know:
alluding to the future conversion of the Gentiles.

REFLEC-

P S A L. X.

The Psalmist complaineth to God of the outrage of the wicked: he prayeth for remedy: he professeth his confidence.

WHY standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?

REFLECTIONS.—1st, David begins this Psalm,

1. With praise and joy. His whole heart was engaged; if not in perfection, yet in sincerity, to shew forth God's marvellous works; and all of them, so far as his memory could reach; especially the many and signal assistances which the Most High had given him against his numerous foes. *Note;* (1.) In all our successes, let God have the praise. (2.) While prosperity makes us thankful, our chief joy must still be in the God of our mercies. (3.) Since God has ever proved himself the Most High, no danger should distress, no enemies dismay us.

2. He ascribes the power to God. It was not his own arm, but the presence and power of the Lord which turned back with confusion his foes, and smote them to the ground. Thus the presence of Jesus, John xviii. 6. confounded the band who approached to seize him; and when he shall sit on the throne of judgment, before his presence the ungodly must fall and perish for ever.

3. God's righteousness was herein manifested. A righteous cause God then owned and vindicated; and on this throne of judgment still he sits, to rescue those who are oppressed with wrong. And here, under every unjust sentence of man, we may still appeal; and though now suffering innocence may find no advocate, and unbelief would suggest that the Lord has forsaken the earth, the day is at hand when every wrong shall be righted, and God appear just in his judgments. What a comfort to the sufferers in the cause of God and truth?

4. The triumphs of God over his enemies are recorded; over Goliath and the Philistines, whose ravages were stopped, their army routed, and their cities destroyed; and over his spiritual foes, *Thou hast rebuked the heathen*, by that Gospel which confounded the idolatry of the heathen; *thou hast destroyed the wicked*, the persecuting powers of pagan Rome; and, as what is purposed in the divine will may be regarded as already completed, *the enemy*, anti-christ, and all his adherents, shall perish together; their ruin shall be complete and final, and their name be blotted out from under heaven.

5. He takes comfort from the views of the enduring kingdom and righteous government of God. When all his foes are fallen, *the Lord shall endure for ever*; he hath prepared his throne for judgment, the great white throne, on which he is ready to appear, and pronounce the eternal state of angels and men. *He shall judge the world in righteousness*, for all judgment is committed unto him. *The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble*, and many are the troubles of the righteous; within, from affliction and temptation; and without, from the ceaseless enmity of the world which lieth in wickedness. But, blessed be God, we have a refuge to fly to

2 The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesteth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.

4 The wicked, through the pride of his

in the arms of Jesus, who is now our present help in every time of trouble; and, though he may for a time permit our enemy to oppress us, soon will he appear as our eternal refuge, to lodge us there where the wicked must cease from troubling. *And they that know thy name*, are acquainted experimentally with the gracious promises made in the word of truth by Jesus Christ, *will put their trust in thee*; though long or severely exercised with trials and troubles, will patiently wait to see the salvation of God; and such will never be disappointed of their hope, *for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee*. Happy, therefore, is the man who putteth his trust in thee.

2dly, David proceeds,

1. To engage others with him in the delightful work of praise. *Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion*, the place where the symbols of his constant presence rested: *declare among the people his doings*, his displays of grace, power, and love towards his church. *When he maketh inquisition for blood*, the blood of saints, spilt by the ungodly, and all the evils inflicted on them, *he remembereth them*; either his faints, who, notwithstanding all their sufferings, are not forgotten by him, nor a drop of their blood unnoticed: or the wicked; he remembereth their deeds, and will recompense them as they deserve. *He forgetteth not the cry of the humble*, who, under the chastising rod, bow down, and, renouncing every hope in themselves, look up to him; though he seem not sometimes to hear their cry, they are not forgotten of him, he will avenge them speedily. Having thus encouraged others to praise and trust him, David,

2. Offers his prayer for the continuance of the mercies that he had experienced. His troubles were many; sometimes he seemed brought to the very gates of death, while his enemies pursued him with implacable hatred. And thus sorely beset is sometimes the faithful soul. But he cries with David, *have mercy upon me*, and then experiences God's supporting hand; *thou that liftest me up from the gates of death*, halt done so from spiritual, and wilt from temporal and eternal death. And this is gloriously applicable to the great Redeemer, for whom God opened the gates of the grave, and lifted him triumphant from the bed of death, as he will also do for every faithful believer in the great resurrection-day.

P S A L. X.

Ver. 1. Why standest thou, &c.] Neither the author nor the particular occasion of this Psalm are certainly known; but it is, as Bishop Patrick observes, a most lively description of wicked men when they are in authority, which they abuse to the oppression of their inferiors, and make no conscience by what arts they bring about their designs.

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countenance, will not seek *after God*: God is not in all his thoughts.

5 His ways are always grievous; thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight: *as for* all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for *I shall* never be in adversity.

7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue *is* mischief and vanity.

8 He sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.

9 He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his net.

10 He croucheth, *and* humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

11 He hath said in his heart, God hath for-

gotten: he hideth his face; he will never see *it*.

12 Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.

13 Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require *it*.

14 Thou hast seen *it*; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite *it* with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.

15 Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil *man*: seek out his wickedness *till* thou find none.

16 The LORD *is* king for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.

17 LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

18 To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

The Vulgate and LXX join this Psalm to the foregoing; and the Rabbis have a rule (which however will not hold good) that every psalm which has not any title prefixed to it, is to be ascribed to the same author who composed the preceding. Mudge observes, that the subject of this psalm is similar to that of the 59th, both of which seem to have been composed at the time when the Assyrians made inroads under Hezekiah.

Ver. 3. *The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire*] For the wicked applaudeth himself upon the desire of his soul, and the greedy of gain blesteth himself. Mudge. Others read the latter clause, *And the covetous blasphemeth, and contemneth the Lord.*

Ver. 4. *The wicked, &c.*] *The wicked in the haughtiness of his looks saith, God will never* ^{require:} *inquire:* } all his thoughts *are without God.* The Psalmist in this verse has given us the true character of the ungodly of this world. By a long disuse of devotion, and open neglect of divine worship, he gradually forgets every duty that he owes his Maker: and when he has for some time habituated himself to live without God in the world, he then begins to doubt his very existence; he then begins to forget that *in him we live and move, and have our being.* See Delaney.

Ver. 5. *His ways are always grievous*] “*Are always inclined to mischief. Thy judgments, the vengeance and punishment with which thou threatenest those sorts of crimes, are far above, as if they rested above in the heavens, and would never come down upon earth; out of his sight.*” i. e. he never represents them to his mind, but, as much as is possible for him, banishes all thoughts of them.

Ver. 8. *His eyes are privily set against the poor*]

Are watching } *for the poor.* It may be proper to observe, once for all, that the word *poor* in the Psalms is not applied to those only who are distressed in their outward circumstances, but also to the poor in spirit; to the humble and afflicted.

Ver. 9. *He lieth in wait*] *He lurketh in ambush, as a lion in his den; he lurketh to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, by drawing him into his net.*

Ver. 10. *He croucheth*] As a lion lies down, and is couchant; by that means to secure himself of his prey, or to fit himself to seize it. This, says the Jewish Arabic translator, is a description of the fashion of a lion; for, when he means to leap, he first coucheth, that he may gather himself together; then he rouseth himself, and puts out his strength, that he may tear his prey: therefore when he speaketh thee fair beware of him, for this is but his deceit.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore doth the wicked, &c.*] We may collect from hence, that there were two kinds of infidels at the time this psalm was written; one of which made God a sort of Epicurean deity, and supposed him not to concern himself with the moral government of the world; the other altogether denied his being. See ver. 4.

Ver. 15. *Break thou the arm of the wicked*] i. e. “*Deprive them of all power to do mischief.*” Mudge renders the next clause, *Seek out his wickedness, &c.*—*Pursue his wickedness, so th at thou find none left:* properly, “*Sit in judgment upon it, so that there be none left to be found: till there remains nothing to punish.*” Others say that the clause is, “*Destroy him utterly, or so subdue him as to put it out of his power to do hurt;*” which very well agrees with the former clause. Houbigant renders it, *Seek out for his iniquity, that it may not prevail.*

Ver.

P S A L. XI.

David encourageth himself in God against his enemies. The providence and justice of God.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

IN the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain.

2 For, lo, the wicked bend *their* bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.

3 If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Ver. 17. Thou wilt prepare their heart] Thou wilt strengthen their heart: ver. 18. Thine ear will listen to judge the fatherless and oppressed; the poor creature of the land shall no longer live in terror. This translation is equally suited to the original as the Vulgate, and much more easy and intelligible. The *land* is God's land; mentioned ver. 16. The latter clause may, however, be translated, *This worthless mortal of earth shall no longer continue to play the tyrant: as much as to say, "This worthless mortal, how much soever a "man of earth, cherished with all its favours, and supported "with all its strength, shall no longer be able to terrify the "people of Jehovah, the God of heaven."* Mudge.

REFLECTIONS.—Two things the Psalmist complains of,

1. The distance of God from him, and the hiding of his face in the times of trouble, when most he needed the light of his countenance to cheer and comfort him. *Note;* (1.) The withdrawing of God's gracious presence, is one of the heaviest burdens of a believer's heart. (2.) If we are at any time left in a state of darkness, and deadness, it becomes us to inquire if there be not a cause, and whether it is not for the correction of our unfaithfulness.

2. The prevalence of the wicked, whose character in strong and striking colours he sets forth.

3. Having represented his own distress, and the wickedness of his enemies, David calls upon God to *arise*; not that he slept, and needed to be awaked; but to manifest the notice that he took of the ungodly, to punish them; and the remembrance that he had of the humble, to protect them. *Lift up thine hand, forget not the humble;* and high time it was to curb the insolence of the wicked, now exalted to the highest pitch, *contemning God, his threatenings, omniscience, and judgments; he hath said in his heart thou wilt not require it.* *Note;* Confidence of impunity is the great encouragement to sin; but how vain is the hope of the hypocrite? *Thou hast seen it;* for from thine all-searching eye nothing is hid, nothing is secret; nor is there any darkness or shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves; *for thou beholdest mischief and spite, their inveterate malice against thy people, though but conceived in thought, to requite it with thy hand,* in punishment adequate to their provocations. *The poor committeth himself unto thee,* in confidence that he shall not be disappointed, whether for body or soul, for time or eternity, he leaveth all his cares in the hands of a faithful creator, *for thou art the helper of the fatherless;* those who like me are destitute, and unable to provide for themselves, find in thee a guardian and protector. Therefore, in answer to their humble confidence, *break thou the arm of the wicked and evil,* be they men or devils, disappoint their devices, and restrain their malice; *seek out his wickedness till thou find none,* make thorough inquisition. And this the faithful may assuredly

expect, for the Lord is king for ever and ever, to protect his loyal subjects, and to destroy his rebellious foes, and this for ever and ever. Therefore the *beaten are perished out of his land;* by David's victories they were expelled from Canaan; by the more glorious victories of the son of David, not a Canaanite shall be shortly left in the believer's heart; and when the Lord Jesus shall appear, to put a final period to the kingdom of Antichrist, and reign over his saints gloriously, not one sinner shall be suffered to have a place in that new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. *Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble:* the secret prayers, which arise inwardly in the heart, God notices before the mouth speaks, and grants the request of the humble. *Thou wilt prepare their heart,* pouring out upon them a spirit of supplication, and teaching them how to pray; or *confirm their heart,* enable them to trust, and not be afraid. *Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear,* thou hast, and thou wilt continue so to do; ever attentive to the prayers of thy people, and ready to give more than they are able to ask or think: *To judge the fatherless and the oppressed,* to plead their cause and rescue them from wrong; that *the man of the earth may no more oppress,* that wicked men in general, and the persecuting antichristian power alluded to in particular, may be utterly and finally destroyed, in the day when the glorious angel shall proclaim, *Ἐπεσε ἡ πόλις Βαβυλῶν, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and Jesus shall complete the salvation of his faithful people, and put all their enemies and his for ever under their feet.* Well may every faithful soul with eager expectation cry, *Lord, how long?*

P S A L. XI.

Title.] למנצח לדוד lamnatseach ledavid. This Psalm was probably composed by David, when his friends advised him to avoid the evil designs of Saul and his other enemies, by sheltering himself in the mountains of Judea. In answer to this advice, contained in the three first verses, he is determined to put his trust in God, whose eyes were open upon what was doing; who would protect the good, and confound the wicked man. The dialogue form in which the Psalm is written, gives it great spirit and beauty.

Ver. 3. If the foundations be destroyed, &c.] When the foundations are pulled up, what hath the righteous man to expect? i. e. What is the work or reward of the righteous man? What has he to do or expect, when the very foundations of justice and government are turned upside down? See Ps. lxxxii. 5. Isai. xxiv. 18. It was on this account, because the foundations were overthrown, and no regard was had to law or right, that David's distrustful friends advised him to flee to the hills, as to places of strength and safety; since otherwise, however righteous himself, however good his cause, he would soon be seized upon and ruined. The rest of the Psalm contains his reply.

Ver.

4 The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

5 The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.

6 Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: *this shall be the portion of their cup.*

7 For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

P S A L. XII.

David, destitute of human comfort, asketh help of God: he comforteth himself with God's judgments on the wicked, and confidence in God's tried promises.

To the chief musician upon Sheminith,

A Psalm of David.

HELP, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; **H** for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: *with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*

Ver. 4. The Lord is in his holy temple] As much as to say, "Though all human hope and assistance should fail me, yet I have the strongest confidence in the interposition and protection of that Almighty, who, though his throne is heaven, yet beholds and protects with providential care those who trust in him."

Ver. 5. The Lord trieth the righteous, &c.] The Lord exploreteth the righteous and the wicked; and him that loveth false-dealing his soul hateth. Mudge.

Ver. 6. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, &c.] He shall rain hot burning coals upon the wicked; fire and brimstone and black tempest. See Lowth's Prelections, p. 80. Others read the verse thus, *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares; fire and brimstone and a tempestuous wind shall be the portion of their cup.* The Psalmist there alludes to the fire and brimstone which fell upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The *portion of their cup*, is a proverbial phrase in Scripture: a *cup* or very disagreeable *potion*, is often used as an emblem of God's judgments. See Pf. lx. 3. lxxv. 8. God's gifts and dispensations, whether good or bad, are ordinarily expressed by a cup poured out, and given men to drink. The heathens had the same expression concerning their gods, as we read in Homer particularly: "There are two cups," says he, "of the gods; the one of good things, the other of bad."

Ver. 7. His countenance doth behold the upright] His countenance beholds equity; i. e. with approbation and favour. Houb.

REFLECTIONS.—Temptation and prayer brighten the true believer's soul; none, perhaps, were ever more exercised with the one, or abundant in the other, than the son of Jesse. We have him here,

1. Expressing his confidence in God, as an answer to the temptation suggested to him. *In the Lord put I my trust*, not in any human contrivances, or human help, but solely in him, whose faithfulness and truth shall be my shield and buckler. *Note*; Fixed and abiding faith in God, like an anchor, sure and steadfast, keeps the soul unmoved in every storm.

2. Repelling the temptation suggested to him by his fearful friends. *How say ye to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain.* *Note*; Uprightness is no protection from persecution; the most blameless characters must expect in the world to meet the greatest malignity. No marvel:

ey testify of the world, that its deeds are evil.

3. He suggests the solid grounds on which his trust was founded, in opposition to all unbelieving fears.

The Lord is in his holy temple, high and lifted up, able to see and to defeat the counsels of the wicked: *the Lord's throne is in heaven*, a throne of grace for all the needy supplicants: a throne of justice, for all who are oppressed with wrong; a throne of judgment, to condemn and sentence the wicked to his deserved punishment. *His eyes behold*, he is acquainted with all the difficulties and distresses of his suffering people; *his eyelids try the children of men*, piercing the secret recesses of their bosoms, and beholding every device conceived against the faithful; and therefore, having such a guardian, they may contentedly trust him. *For the Lord trieth the righteous*, putteth them in the furnace of affliction, not to consume, but purify them, to strengthen their faith, exercise their patience, and make his great love more known to them. *But the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth*; although at present they may seem prosperous, and not plagued like other men, there is a lowering cloud over their head, ready to burst in an eternal storm. The day is near, even at the door, when upon the wicked, those who persist in their iniquities, and die as they live, servants of corruption, *he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest*; sudden as a snare it shall seize them, and horrible, yea infinitely more horrible than that storm of vengeance which broke upon the devoted cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, shall this tempest of Divine wrath overtake them; the scorching fire consuming the body, curst only with immortality to be tormented, and furious blasts of his displeasure beating upon the guilty soul, with anguish unutterable and eternal. Read, sinner, and tremble, for *this is the portion of thy cup*. The sweet draughts of sin which now intoxicate thee will put into thy hand this cup of trembling, to be thy portion for ever and for ever. *For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness*, and will certainly manifest it by such exemplary punishment on the sinner, and protection of those who, from a divine principle of faith and love, walk in holiness before him. *His countenance doth behold the upright*; he regards them with the tokens of his favour, lifts up now the light of his countenance to comfort and support them, and will bring them to that beatific vision, where in glory they shall see him face to face. Happy the people who are in such a case!

PSAL.

3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things :

4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

5 For the oppression of the poor, for the fighting of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

8 The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

P S A L. XII.

Title.] למנצח על השמינית lamnatseach al hofstheminit. See the note on the title of Ps. vi. This psalm complains of the falsehood and treachery abounding in the world; from which God is introduced as determined to deliver his people. Some conjecture that he points particularly at the corruption which reigned in the court of Saul, and more especially at Doeg, and the treacherous Ziphites; who promised David their friendship, with no other design than to deliver him up to Saul.

Ver. 2. They speak vanity] They speak falsehood. Mudge. *A double heart*, in the Hebrew is לב ולב beleb valeb, with heart and heart; that is, they spake as if they had two hearts: the one to hate their neighbour and form designs against him, and the other to prompt the tongue to pretend a friendship for him.

Ver. 3. That speaketh proud things] The Hebrew word גדולות gedoloth signifies great things, or great words; for the more artificial and dissembling a man is, the more he affects a pompous formality in his discourse, that he may the better deceive.

Ver. 5. Now will I arise, saith the Lord] The beauty and energy of this fine prosopopœia, must be felt by every reader. Nothing can be more poetical and expressive. Houbigant renders the last clause, *I will procure them safety, that they may breathe*; namely, from their troubles.

Ver. 6. The words of the Lord are pure words] The words of God, mentioned in the verse before, may certainly be depended on; they are pure truth, without any mixture of dross or deceit: *Silver fined in a ground furnace* [a furnace or melting-pot in the earth] *seven times purified*.

Ver. 7. Thou shalt keep them, &c.] Thou shalt keep those [words] O Lord; thou shalt preserve him, &c.

Ver. 8. The wicked walk on every side] Dr. Hammond observes that this verse is very obscure, and Bishop Hare ingenuously acknowledges that he does not understand it. Mudge renders it thus: *The wicked walk up and down on every side; as thou art on high, thou art become contemptible to the sons of men.* I make the Psalmist, says he, apply here to the jealousy of God, as he frequently does, that his honour may arouse him to do justice upon the wicked; "Because thou residest up on high, thou art become disregarded by men; and that makes the wicked walk up and down in such numbers." It is a very frequent sentiment in the Psalms, *Is there knowledge in the Most High, &c.?*

REFLECTIONS.—Ist, It has been the just complaint of God's saints in every age, how few faithful could be found. David here with deep concern bewails it; and since he

could find so few like-minded with himself, while in general all pursued the ways of sin and vanity, he flies to God for help. *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men:* Bad times indeed, when piety towards God is decayed, and honesty to men ceases; when all seek their own, not the things which be of Jesus Christ!

2dly, What David prays for, his faith sees ready to be accomplished. *The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips*, by judgments, from the earth, and give them shortly their portion with liars in the burning lake; and *the tongue that speaketh proud things*; none so high but God can humble them; his sword shall smite all the children of pride. The character of the proud is here described, *Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail*; by eloquence carry the cause against truth and justice; or, as if they need but speak the word and it is done. Such high conceits does pride generate. *Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?* casting off the government of God, and deifying themselves, as if bound to give account of none of their words, and renouncing the authority of the Almighty. But they will be disappointed; there is one who observes all the high imaginations and hard speeches of ungodly sinners, and will not suffer them to pass with impunity: for, in the height of their insolence, God will make bare his arm, and shew them to their cost who is Lord over them. *For the oppression of the poor, who groan like Israel in Egypt under the afflictions they endure, and for the fighting of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord*, when the arrogance of the proud is at the height, and his people's patience ready to fail; in that critical time he will arise to confound the one, and to rescue the other; *I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him, or lays snares for him*, which shall be broken in pieces, and the souls of the righteous delivered as a bird from the net of the fowler. *Note*; God's time is the best time; and if we have but faith, he will not fail; for the words of the Lord are pure words, proceeding from the fountain of purity, and therefore can never disappoint or deceive those who trust in them; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times, or more precious than the most refined silver, and pure from all human mixture and adulteration. *Thou shalt keep them, O Lord*; namely, the poor and needy, who trust in thee, from all the power of evil, and from the snares of the enemy; *thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever*; from the wickedness of it, that they be not corrupted, and from their persecutors that they be not destroyed. Blessed be God, we are not in our own keeping, but in so much better hands; so able to preserve us from falling, and so faithful to his promises: we are safe therefore, though the wicked walk on every

P S A L. XIII.

David complaineth of delay in help: he prayeth for preventing grace; he boasteth of divine mercy.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

HOW long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, *having* sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

every side, when the vilest men are exalted, have the power and dominion here below: or, as the latter clause may be rendered, according to their exaltation shall be their vileness. They shall fall as low in misery as they have been exalted in dignity.

P S A L. XIII.

Title.] לַמְנַצֵּחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד lamnatseach mizmor ledavid. This psalm was written by David, when, as Theodoret thinks, he was greatly distressed by his rebellious son Absalom. In the first four verses he represents his danger, and prays for deliverance: in the last, he expresses his assurance of obtaining it. The Arabic title of this Psalm is remarkable: "In this Psalm mention is made "of the insolence of his enemies, with a prophecy of the "presence of Christ."

Ver. 2. How long shall I take counsel, &c.] Or, according to the original, revolve divers thoughts in my mind? as persons do who are reduced to the last extremity, and very anxious and uncertain what resolutions to take.

*Ver. 3. Lighten mine eyes] The meaning of this phrase may perhaps be best judged of by Jonathan's speech, 1 Sam. xiv. 29. for he, being very hungry and ready to faint, dipped his rod in an honeycomb, and ate of it; and the text saith, his eyes were enlightened; i. e. he was refreshed by it. But this enlightening of the eyes may, by an easy metaphor, be applied to the political state. When in any time of affliction, expressed frequently by darkness and gloominess, a person is relieved and refreshed, his eyes are said to be enlightened in proportion to that refreshment which hungry fainting persons receive by meat. So Ezra ix. 8. The restitution, after captivity, giving the Jews a little reviving in their bondage, is styled God's *lightening their eyes*. And so in this place the sadness which lay upon David was parallel to a fainting fit of hunger in the body, or to captivity in a state, which, if it were not speedily relieved, would soon end in death.*

REFLECTIONS.—Though cast down by affliction, while we have a throne of grace open, we never need despair. Hither David flies with his complaints and prayers.

1. He bewails his present dejected state, and expostulates with God on the length and severity of his sufferings. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord?* Not that God's all-comprehending mind ever forgets, or that his people especially are neglected or forsaken of him; but it is the language of unbelieving fear, by which our foolish hearts aggravate their sorrows. *For ever?* Every moment seems long to the afflicted, especially to those who, as the summit

3 Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep* of death.

4 Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; *and* those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

5 But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

6 I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

of their other griefs, experience darkness and desertion in their souls. *How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?* with this support all other evils would be tolerable; but this withdrawn, adds aggravated weight to the burden. *How long shall I take counsel in my soul?* uncertain how to act, and filled with anxious care; whilst, in a labyrinth of trials, no way appears to extricate myself from them, *having sorrow in my heart daily.*

2. In his distress, when severely thrust at, and the length of his trials almost overcoming his hopes of relief, he lifts up his heart to God. *Consider*, look upon my distressed case with concern for my suffering; *and hear me* mourn in my prayer; *O Lord my God*, in whom I will still trust, though thou slay me. Thou art my God, and I will never quit my plea of interest in thy regard. *Note:* If we can say, *my God*, under our deepest trials, surely there is hope of their end. The matter of his prayer is, *Lighten mine eyes*, dim with sorrow and fear; shine into me to dispel the clouds of unbelief; guide me in the way, that I may see the door of escape open, and be refreshed and comforted after this night of spiritual darkness, *lest I sleep the sleep of death*, pine away in my body, decay in my soul, or perish in my iniquities.

3. He urges the malicious pleasure that his enemies would take in his fall, and the dishonour which would consequently be cast on God. *Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him;* for Satan triumphs in the success of his devices; *and those that trouble me*, my persecuting foes, *rejoice when I am moved;* tempted to sin, or to despair under it. *Note:* The world takes a malicious pleasure in the christian's fall; and men are happy, if they can find any thing to make them hope that he is no better than themselves.

4. He expresses his humble confidence, that, amidst all he felt, God would support and comfort him. *But I have trusted in thy mercy;* merit I disclaim, hope or help in myself I have none; but in thee I trust; and therefore *my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation:* thine, for thou art able to save to the uttermost; and therefore I will encourage my soul in hope. *I will sing unto the Lord*, the gratitude of my heart shall speak in my joyful lips, *because he hath dealt bountifully with me;* he hath, for faith realises the promise, and gives present subsistence to the expected relief. *Note:* (1.) When we come to God in our miseries, in prayer to pour out our souls to him, he will send us away rejoicing; and, like Hannah, *our countenance shall no more be sad*, 1 Sam. i. 18. (2.) Singing of psalms is the ancient practice

PSAL. XIV.

David describeth the corruption of a natural man: he convinceth the wicked by the light of their conscience: he glorieth in the salvation of God.

To the chief musician. *A Psalm of David.*

THE fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.* They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is none that doeth good.*

2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were

any that did understand, *and seek God.*

3 They are all gone aside, they are *all together* become filthy: *there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as they eat bread,* and call not upon the LORD.

5 There were they in great fear: for God *is in the generation of the righteous.*

6 Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD *is his refuge.*

tice of God's saints; and wherever there is found a heart to trust him, there will be a mouth to praise him.

PSAL. XIV.

Title.] לִנְנֵזֶחַ לְדָוִד lamnatseach ledavid. This Psalm is thought to have been composed by David upon the almost total defection of his people to Absalom. The 5th verse seems strongly to mark this circumstance. See 2 Sam. xvii. 8, &c. Mr. Mudge however observes, that it appears from the last verse, that this Psalm was composed during the captivity, and from the 4th and 5th verses, that it arose from a particular incident, where the heathens, in the midst of their carousing, without any sense of God, or acknowledgment of his goodness, were somehow put into a great fright (where there were no human grounds for fear, as the 52d Psalm adds). This seems to point out the feast of Belsazzar; where the utmost loose was given to impiety; the sacred vessels, purely in defiance, being employed to promote their debauchery; and where they were frightened indeed in a manner wholly supernatural.

Ver. 1. The fool.] By the fool is here meant the pagan: It is thus that Job, xxx. 8. calls the heathenish Cuthians, *children of fools;* that is, of Gentile extraction. In eminent calamity it was in the early ages a pagan practice, not only to call in question the existence of their deities, but likewise to prosecute them with the most dreadful curses and imprecations. The Jews, fond of imbibing the customs of their pagan neighbours, seem to have enfranchised this among others. In the simplicity of early ages, when men were at their ease, that general opinion, so congenial to the human mind, of a God and his moral government, was so strong as never to be brought into question. It was when they found themselves in distress and misery, whether in public or private life, that they began to complain, to question the justice, or deny the existence of Providence. Thus far Bishop Warburton. Others however imagine, that by the word fool, both here and in Pf. liii. libertines, and profane persons in general, are denoted, whose minds were depraved by the viciousness of their hearts. Thus the Platonists styled all wicked men *fools,* though they seemed to themselves to be very wise. It appears from the 5th verse, in which the Psalmist intimates concerning these fools that they did not call upon God, that their crime was not direct atheism, but an irreligious disposition, proceeding from a fond imagination that God exerted no moral government upon earth.

Ver. 2. The Lord looked down, &c.] These, and the

following words, as to the sense of them, are taken from Gen. vi. 5. They are here used in confutation of the profane and Epicurean ideas of those who denied a Providence.

Ver. 3. They are all gone aside, &c.] St. Paul, having cited this verse, Rom. iii. 10, &c. subjoins three others, which are translated in the liturgy version of the church of England, but are not to be found in the modern Hebrew. In order to support the integrity of the Hebrew text, it has been supposed that the apostle, in his quotation, has cited from unconnected places, and different parts of scripture, and that the three verses which are to be met with in the Vatican copy of the LXX were inserted, or rather interpolated, by some Christian, to make it agree with Rom. iii. But to this it may be replied, that no instance can be given of the apostle's quoting the Old Testament in so vague a manner. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that these three verses are not to be found in the Alexandrian copies of the LXX. But perhaps those were taken from a Hebrew copy too, wherein the passage was omitted. The Vulgate, the Ethiopic, and some Arabic copies, as Grotius observes, read the passage in question; and it is likewise observable, that the quotations in the New Testament seem to have been taken from the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew; the very words in the Septuagint being made use of by the apostles, and particularly in this passage. This consideration must certainly give no small sanction to that version; and, of consequence, affords us a strong probability, that the verses inserted Rom. iii. were originally in the Hebrew text. See Dr. Hammond, and Pilkington's Remarks. Mr. Green observes upon this Psalm in general, that it differs so much at present from the 53d, that learned men are more inclined to impute the variations in the latter to the design of the writer, than to the carelessness of transcribers: but I am persuaded, says he, that upon a collation of the manuscripts that we have, modern as they are, the very reverse will be found to be true.

Ver. 4, 5. Have all the workers, &c.] *D they not observe, all the dealers in vanity, devourers of my people? They eat bread, they called not upon the Lord: ver. 5. They were upon the spot, in a great fear:* Mudge: who remarks, that these words point at something which had lately happened at an impious entertainment, where God sufficiently discovered his favour to his people, as well as his vengeance to their enemies.

Ver. 6. Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor] *Will ye shame the counsel of the afflicted?—“Will ye now shame, “or laugh at the poor oppressed people, for making God*

7 Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

P S A L. XV.

David describeth a citizen of Zion.

A Psalm of David.

LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

3 *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. *He that* sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

“their refuge? ver. 7. O that I could once see them back again in their own land!” This great event, probably, gave the author spirit to hope; and therefore in the view of it he proceeds exultingly, *When the Lord, &c.* See Mudge; who begins the 6th verse with the last clause of the 5th, thus: *Yes, God is in the generation of the righteous:* If the Psalm, however, is to be understood of Absalom, this last verse must refer to David's wish for his restoration to Jerusalem again, after his sad expulsion from thence by his son. See 1 Chron. xvi. 35.

REFLECTIONS.—However outward sins may shock the conscience, no man can truly be emptied of himself, or be led to self-despair, till God opens to him the plague of his heart, and makes him see the desperate wickedness of a fallen nature. This is here done to the discerning sinner.

1. The heart of the fool is laid open. *The fool, or the sinner, for sin is the foolishness of folly, hath said in his heart, There is no God.* Though they are abandoned indeed who avow atheism in principle, yet the hardened sinner feels it his interest that there should be no God, secretly wishes that there may be none, and would fain persuade himself that there is none; no God to judge, no hell to torment. *Note;* (1.) If the thoughts of multitudes were as open as their countenances, they would startle at each other as monsters. (2.) All sin in practice, proceeds from a measure of atheism in principle.

2. The ways of men correspond to their nature: *they are corrupt, or they do corrupt:* they are such in themselves, their nature utterly defiled, being conceived and born in sin, and their inward arts very wickedness; and they corrupt others, provoke, stir up, and draw out the corruption which is in the hearts of sinners like themselves. *They have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good;* their practice corresponds with their principles; for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? And,

3. This is the case by nature universally; not in one place, or one age, but uniformly the same in every place, in every man, in every age; so God testifies on the view of all mankind, when *the Lord looked down from heaven.* The fool said, *There is no God,* or he careth not for it; he hideth away his face, and will never see the evil: but God's eyes are upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand the ways of truth and righteousness, and seek God, the knowledge of him and his will. But what a fearful account does the God of truth who cannot lie, the God of omniscience who cannot err, give of the

state of man! *They are all gone aside* with universal apostacy; they have forsaken the path of duty and holiness; *they are all together become filthy, or putrid;* loathsome and offensive to the Divine purity, as a dead carcase in our nostrils. *There is none that doeth good, no not one;* not a single exception can be found among all the sons of men: they are one man's children; and, as descendants of a fallen parent, a seed of evil doers. *Note;* (1.) By nature there is no moral difference between one man and another; though in outward transgression there may be much, in inward apostacy there is none. (2.) If there be any good wrought in us, or done by us, we are indebted for it solely to the saving grace of God.

4. The Psalmist concludes with a devout wish: *O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!* especially that Redeemer who should turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and bring a cure for the desperate disease of human corruption: *when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people by the powerful agency of his Son, manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and to set the captives of sin free; then Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad;* his faithful people shall rejoice in their present salvation begun; and their joy shall by and by be full, when he shall appear to destroy all his enemies and theirs, and complete their final salvation in eternal glory.

P S A L. XV.

Title.] מזמור לדוד mizmor ledavid. It is not known with any certainty when David composed this Psalm. Bishop Patrick thinks that it was upon his bringing the ark to mount Sion, 2 Sam. vi., or upon his being restored to it again, after having been driven from it by Absalom. The latter part of it is an answer to the question in the first verse, which gains additional authority as being delivered by God himself. It contains a fine exhortation to the people, to live as became those who were under the government of the righteous God. On which account it seems probable, that it was rather composed for the use of the people, when they assembled there to worship at the stated annual solemnities.

Ver. 1. Lord, who shall abide, &c.] Heb. מי יגור mii iagur. Who shall sojourn and lodge.—i. e. “Whom wilt thou admit to pay thee honour “in thy temple?” an expression accommodated to the nation, which came from all parts three times a year, to do homage in the temple; the answer, therefore, to this question in the last verse, is, He that doeth these things shall never be shaken; i. e. he shall ever be prosperous, and in

5 *He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent.* He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

a condition to pay his duty to God at Jerusalem. This gives the Psalm the air of one of those which are called *Psalms of ascent*, and which were sung on occasion of their going up to Jerusalem at their usual solemnities. Mudge.

Ver. 2. He that walketh uprightly] *He that walketh steadily uniform.* Mudge. The word *צדק* *tsedek* rendered *righteousness*, signifies not only those duties which strict justice requires from man to man, but likewise all those kind and benevolent offices, which, though not commanded in the law, are the ornaments of our nature, and the very support of society.

Ver. 3. Nor taketh up a reproach, &c.] *Nor throweth a disgrace upon his neighbour*: namely, by dishonouring his wife or daughter. I understand it so, says Mr. Mudge, for two reasons; one, that the common translation comes too near the meaning of the first clause of this verse; the second, that otherwise something very essential to a good man, and which is usually made part of his character, (See Ezek. xviii.) would be omitted.

Ver. 4. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not] The greatest temptation to the breach of oaths and promises to others, is, when the performance of them brings mischief on ourselves; for then is the trial of a man's virtue; and not when he designs either to gain, or not to lose any thing by it. It is, therefore, a very considerable part of a just man's character, that, whatever temporal inconvenience it may involve him in, he breaks not his oath which he has once given.

Ver. 5. He that putteth not out his money to usury] See Deut. xxiii. 19, 20. The next clause seems plainly to shew, that exorbitant and excessive usury is here more immediately pointed at.

REFLECTIONS. The former Psalm described that desperate corruption of fallen man, which rendered him unfit for communion with God; this describes the character of the faithful, whose captivity to sin is turned, who are justified and forgiven through the blood of Jesus, and by his Spirit made meet for an inheritance among the saints in light.

1. The Psalmist puts an important question: *Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?* have a place among the faithful in the church of God, and abide there as living members upon earth, and after death be admitted to thy presence in glory? *Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?* in the heavenly Zion, and the city of the living God? *Note;* (1.) This is a question which we should often be asking, that we may with self-application say, Lord, is it I? (2.) Many have a seat in God's tabernacle on earth, who will find no dwelling in his holy hill above. (3.) If we would know our true state, we must enquire at God's mouth, and examine and judge of ourselves, not by the opinions of men, but by his holy word.

2. The question is resolved, and we must apply the character here described: happy for us if we can find our

hearts correspond thereunto. (1.) *He that walketh uprightly*, with simplicity and godly sincerity; whose bent is to please God, and who is without dissimulation. (2.) *And worketh righteousness*; who acts towards man with integrity in all his dealings. (3.) *And speaketh the truth in his heart*; thinks before he speaks in the presence of God, that he may not offer the prayer and service of feigned lips; and among men his words are ever the true copy of his heart; nor does he defraud or go beyond his brother in any matter, making conscience in all his worldly business to speak truth with his neighbour. (4.) He desires in conversation to be harmless and inoffensive; his neighbour's reputation is sacred, he never speaks evil of him, either with malicious design or in common talk; *nor taketh up a reproach against him*; is pleased with the tales of slander, or encourages them; but, contrariwise, is ever the advocate of the injured and the absent, pleading their cause, and desiring to cast the veil of charity over the multitude of sins: *nor doeth evil to his neighbour*; his deeds correspond to his words, he does not speak him fair to his face, and, when opportunity offers, make a property of him, or injure him; but studies to advance his interests as his own, and to serve him with his counsel, purse, or influence. (5.) He values men not by their outward show, but by their inward piety: *in whose eyes a vile person is contemned*; or a wicked man, notwithstanding he may possess the world's goods, honours, and esteem, is *contemned*; not that he refuses to pay him the civil respect due to his station; but he judges of him according to God's word, and counts it his duty to avoid all intimate connection with him, and is as fearless of his frowns, as regardless of his favour: *but he honoureth them that fear the Lord*; however poor and despicable they may be in the eyes of the world, he regards them as the excellent of the earth, and they are his companions and familiar friends. (6.) His oath is sacred: *he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not*; however much prejudice he may sustain, he fulfils his engagement for his oath's sake, unless released from the obligation. (7.) He is no extortioner, *he that putteth not out his money to usury*; that is, to take advantage of his neighbour's distress, to exact unjust premiums or interest; for a reasonable recompence for the use of money is as lawful, before God and man, as the rent of land, or the price of labour; and he often lends where the case requires a charitable help, hoping for nothing again. (8.) No bribe can tempt him to bear a false evidence, or engage in a bad cause, or pervert judgment; *nor taketh reward against the innocent.*

3. *He that doeth these things*; the man whom this character perseveringly suits, *shall never be moved*, shall have a place in the church of God, as tried and found faithful, shall be enabled to persevere amidst all difficulties and dangers, and finally be admitted into God's mansion of glory, as a pillar in the temple of God, to go out no more. May such be our character, then such shall be our end!

P S A L. XVI.

David, in distrust of merit, and hatred of idolatry, fleeth to God for preservation: he sheweth the hope of his calling, of the resurrection, and life everlasting.

Michtam of David.

PRESERVE me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

2 *O my soul*, thou hast said unto the LORD, thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;

3 *But* to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* hasten after another god: their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

5 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

P S A L. XVI.

Title, מכתם לדוד miktam ledavid. Michtam of David.] David's sculpture. This title occurs before some other Psalms, and it is rendered constantly by the LXX, *σηλογραφια*, "an inscription for, or to be engraved on, a pillar." Houbigant translates it, *arcantum, secret*. It seems to mean, that those Psalms to which this word is prefixed are especially remarkable, and worthy of everlasting remembrance; worthy to be written in golden letters, and set up in some public place to teach; for so it is expressed Psal. lx.; that is, that the people might learn them, and be able to join. This Psalm, besides the admirable expressions of David's faith and confidence in God, when, as it is supposed, he was violently persecuted by Saul, contains a very remarkable prophecy concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, and particularly his resurrection from the dead. See the remarks on the title of Psal. lx.

Ver. 1. Preserve me, O God, &c.] The application which St. Peter makes of a great part of this Psalm to Jesus Christ, Acts, ii. 25—31. obliges us to look upon it as a prophecy, wherein he himself is introduced as speaking to God the Father. These first words of the Psalm, *Preserve me, O God, &c.* briefly comprehend the prayer of Jesus Christ to his Father, related John, xvii. 2, &c. and that which he made to him in his agony, Matth. xxvi. 39. 42. 44. together with that great confidence in the love of God his Father, which he shewed even to his death; which made his enemies insultingly say to him on the cross, *Let him deliver him now, if he will have him.*

Ver. 2. O my soul, thou hast said, &c.] I have said unto the Lord. Houbigant. *My goodness extendeth not to thee*, means, as applied to Christ, that the services which he performed by his ministry, and the benefits which he procured by his sufferings, did not, properly speaking, make any addition of happiness or glory to God; because, being infinitely perfect in himself, his glory cannot be increased by any services that are paid him. The *saints* and *excellent* mentioned in the next verse, mean the faithful in general, those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus. See 1 Cor. i. 2. John, xvii.

Ver. 4. Their sorrows, &c.] This verse is put in opposition to the foregoing one; and intimates, that the lot of the persons here mentioned shall be very different from that

of the *saints*, who are the objects of his love. In the words, *shall be multiplied*, we may suppose our blessed Saviour to comprehend all the calamities which befel the Jews, for having rejected him, and for having desired another Messiah. And this expression, *Their sorrows shall be multiplied*, perfectly agrees with the condition when in the Messiah found the Jews at his coming into the world: they had then for a considerable time been subject to the Roman yoke: but within a few years after, their *sorrows* were to be exceedingly multiplied, as a punishment to them for rejecting that true Messiah.

Hasten after another god] The word *god* is not in the original; but added here, as most of the interpreters suppose that this text relates to idolaters: But here we may understand *another Messiah*: Our blessed Saviour seems by these words to have meant the Jews, who rejected him, and expected a Messiah very different from him, such as should come in worldly pomp, and establish a temporal kingdom among them. By *their drink offerings, &c.* in the next clause is meant, that the sacrifices which the Jews made to God of the blood of beasts, should be no more accepted, and that he would no longer have regard to the oblations of that unbelieving people. The latter words, *take up their names, &c.* may signify two things: 1. That this rebellious and obstinate people, for whom Jesus Christ had interested himself with so much love, was going to be thenceforth the object of his aversion; as the Jews testified their abomination of certain unclean beasts, by avoiding to mention them by their names. And, 2. That Jesus Christ would no longer pray unto God for them, as a nation.

Ver. 5. The Lord is the portion, &c.] See the note on Psal. xi. 6. *Thou maintainest my lot*, means that God had preserved for him the glory to which he was to be exalted in the quality of Messiah. See Psal. ii. 8. *Lot* is here put for *heritage*, in allusion to the division which was made of the land of Canaan by lot. The same allusion is carried on in the next verse; where *lines* signify the lot or tract of land which it was anciently the custom to divide by lines. The *goodly heritage* was, first, the glory to which he was advanced by his ascension; and, secondly, the establishment of his kingdom throughout the world.

Ver. 7. My reins also instruct me] By *reins* is meant the *secret thoughts* and *inward reflections* of the mind; in the same

8 I have set the LORD always before me : because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth : my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy presence *is* fulness of joy ; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

same manner as the *heart* is often mentioned to express the hidden purposes and desires of the soul. See Psal. vii. 10. xxvi. 2. Jer. xii. 2. Rev. ii. 23.

Ver. 8. *Before me*] That is, he always had a regard to his Father's will, without swerving from it in any respect (See John, xvii. 4.) ; and, consequently, was always assured of the assistance of God, and of the faithfulness of his promises. *At my right hand*, is a figurative expression, signifying the efficacious succour of God in favour of his people. See Psal. lxxiii. 23. cix. 31, &c.

Ver. 9. *My glory*] That is, *his tongue*, as St. Peter explains it, Acts, ii. 26. ; for the Hebrews give the tongue the name of *glory*, as Psal. lvii. because it was bestowed upon us to glorify God ; and because it is our glory, as being the instrument of expressing our thoughts by words. *My flesh shall rest in hope*, means, "*My body shall rest in the grave ; with an assurance that it shall soon come forth from thence by a happy resurrection.*"

Ver. 10. *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, &c.*] In **שְׁוֹל** *Sheol*, the place of departed souls. See the note on Psal. ix. 17. Bishop Pearson on the Creed, and Peters on Job, p. 320. *Thine Holy One*, means "Him whom thou hast sanctified and consecrated to be the *Messiah*, (John, x. 36. Isa. liv. 5.) and who hath exactly observed whatever in that quality thou hast committed to his charge." *Thou wilt shew me the path of life*, in the next verse, signifies, "Thou wilt raise me on the third day, in order to exalt me to thine everlasting kingdom." It may be thought an omission in us, not to observe, that in our printed Hebrew copies the word rendered *Holy One* is plural, **קְדוֹשֵׁי** *chusidika* : But the best expositor of the text, St. Peter, renders it in the singular, Acts, ii. 27. xiii. 35. as several manuscripts read it in the singular ; and the Masorettes themselves have ordered it to be so read. However, as much has been said upon the subject, by the Doctors Kennicott, Rutherford, &c. we beg leave to refer our readers to them.

REFLECTIONS.—1st,

1. This psalm opens with the prayer of faith. *Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust*; as David professes to do, in opposition to all his enemies; and as the Lord Jesus did, when *in the days of his flesh he offered up supplications and prayers, and was heard, in that he feared, and trusted in God*, Heb. v. 7. *Note*; The prayer of faith is ever effectual.

2. He solemnly devotes himself to God. *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord*; and therefore, as such, there was a sure foundation for faith : as our God, we may ever safely trust him with all the concerns of body and soul. This may be well applied to the Redeemer; who, as possessing a human soul, as well as flesh, is in that respect inferior to the Father; and therefore, as Mediator, avouches the Lord for his God.

3. He expresses his humble sense of his own goodness; it *extendeth not to thee*, to make God his debtor, or to add to his happiness; *but to the saints that are in the earth, who felt the exercise of it*; and *to the excellent, in whom is all my delight*; and, therefore, I am desirous to serve them in every good word and work. Of Christ this may also be said, whose obedience and sufferings, however infinitely extensive in their blessed influence on the sons of men, added nothing to the self-sufficient God, to whom the righteousness of his Son brought no gain; nor could our everlasting ruin have occasioned any loss. And though, in the mediatorial transactions, there is a glorious display made of the wisdom, grace, and righteousness of God; yet, had they never appeared in this way, they would, notwithstanding, have eternally existed the same in him; the good-will is wholly to us, whom his grace sanctifies, and in whom he is pleased to express his delight.

4. He cleaves to God as his happy and enduring portion. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup*: his love is my richest treasure, his favour my sweetest enjoyment. *Thou maintainest my lot*, makest it abiding, so that the world cannot take it away. Which is also most applicable to the Redeemer, whose meat and drink it was to do the Father's will; happy in constant communion with him, and able to bring to eternal glory his faithful people, in whom he should be everlastingly satisfied. *Note*; (1.) The love of God is the best portion; compared with that, all things beside are dung and loss. (2.) They who live by faith, find consolations in their cup more cheering than wine. (3.) The present comfort that God bestows, is an earnest of the everlasting bliss which he has in store for the faithful.

5. He ascribes the praise of all to God. *I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel*, to choose this happy portion; *my reins also instruct me in the night-seasons*. His inmost thoughts, under the Divine influence, when on his bed, muse upon God; both instructing him in the blessing that he possessed, and the obligations thence arising to love and serve so gracious a master: on Jesus *the Spirit of Counsel* (Isa. xi. 2.) rested, and whole nights he spent in meditation and prayer to God. May the same Spirit of wisdom and counsel rest on my soul; and, taught by this, day and night may I be led in the way which the Lord would have me to go!

2dly, If it be asked concerning this psalm, as the eunuch did on another occasion, of *whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself, or of some other man?* we have an express answer, Acts, ii. 25, &c. where the last four verses are particularly applied to our divine Redeemer. These verses,

1. Express his confidence in God, and the support derived from him to go through the arduous task assigned him: *I have set the Lord always before me*; his power and faithful-

P S A L. XVII.

David, in confidence of his integrity, asketh defence of God against his enemies: he sheweth their pride, craft, and eagerness: he prayeth against them in confidence of his hope.

A Prayer of David.

HEAR the right, O LORD; attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer, *that goeth* not out of feigned lips.

2 Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

faithfulness: because he is at my right hand to strengthen me, I shall not be moved, notwithstanding all the snares of my enemies, the torments before me, at which humanity shudders, and the pains of hell which seize my soul, while my body agonizes on the tree. Though Jesus prayed that the cup might pass from him, he was content to drink it, and triumphantly cried, "It is finished," when he gave up the ghost.

2. They declare his joy in the God of his salvation, under the most dark and dismal dispensation; when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and his body laid low in the grave, there was reviving hope in the end; *therefore my heart is glad, and my glory (my tongue, Acts, ii. 26.) rejoiceth* in hope, in sure and certain hope of God's glory being displayed, and his faithful people's salvation accomplished by these sufferings in their stead. *My flesh also shall rest in hope*, even when my body is lying in the dust, and my enemies triumphant, as if they had completed their conquest; still I shall rest, and find the clods of the valley sweet unto me, in expectation of the glory which shall follow. Two chief causes of this joy are here assigned. [1.] His victory over death by a speedy and glorious resurrection. *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.* The body of Christ being pure as his soul, and joined inseparably with the divine person of the Son, was a holy thing; nor was it suffered, as our sinful bodies, to putrify in the dust; for, on the morning of the third day, he broke the bands of death, by which it was impossible that he should be holden, and rose the conqueror of death and hell, to the confusion of his amazed foes, and to the comfort of his dejected disciples. [2.] His ascension into heaven, and reigning in glory everlasting. *Thou wilt shew me the path of life*; not only raise me from death temporal, but exalt me also to life eternal: that life in glory, where *in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* Consolations unutterable, and dignity transcendent, reward the sufferings of the glorified Jesus. *Note;* (1.) Where Jesus found support in his sufferings, there may we also; for every member of his body mystical can say, Thy God is my God. (2.) When we are putting off our bodies in the dust, the resurrection of Jesus is the support and comfort of the dying believer; for if we have been planted with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: and as

3 Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

5 Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

6 I have called upon thee; for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and bear my speech.

members of his body, because he lives, we shall live also. (3.) The lively prospects of approaching glory may well make us sit loose to all the joys of sense, and reconcile us to all the sufferings that we may be called unto: our light afflictions are but for a moment; but a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory approaches: earthly joys are poor and transitory; but the pleasures at God's right hand are pure without alloy, and perpetual as the everlasting spring from whence they flow. Be these my happy portion!

P S A L. XVII.

Title.] תפלה לדוד *tephillah ledavid, a Prayer of David.* The author, in this Psalm, earnestly prays for deliverance from his enemies; whom he describes as just ready to swallow him up. In the 4th and 5th verses he justifies his innocence, and pictures his enemies in the 14th as persons intoxicated with prosperity. By the 3d and 15th verses it seems to be a night-piece. Dr. Delaney supposes it to have been written after David's parting with Jonathan, and going into exile. See 1 Sam. xx. 42.

Ver. 1. Hear the right, O Lord] Hear, O righteous Lord] Houbigant.

Ver. 3. Thou hast visited me in the night] "Thou hast been present with me in my greatest privacies; to discover whether, in my retirement from the eyes of men, I was forming any evil designs, or indulging any mischievous imaginations." The last clause of this verse is obscure. David here is thought by many interpreters to hint at what passed in the camp of Saul, when Abishai would have killed him, but was prevented by David, 1 Sam. xxvi. 9; and the sense will be clearer, if the first words of this verse be added to the former, as they actually are in the LXX. Then the sense will be; "I have purposed that my mouth shall not offend, concerning men's works;" i. e. "I am so far from doing any wicked thing, that I will keep a strict watch, even over my words; and, though my enemies persecute me ever so much by their evil deeds, I am resolved that they shall not tempt me to speak evil. And as to what I said of my innocence, in respect of any wicked overt-act, this is one remarkable instance of it, that, when I had my enemy in my power, by attending to and obeying thy commandments, O God, the words of thy lips, I preserved my innocence in that great trial of it, and kept me from the ways of that destroyer, Abishai." Then the next verse follows

7 Shew thy marvellous loving kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them.

8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

9 From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.

10 They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.

11 They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;

12 Like as a lion that is greedy of his

prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.

13 Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:

14 From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.

15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

follows naturally; in which he beseeches God to keep him in this righteous course: *Hold up my goings, &c.*

Ver. 7. Shew, &c.] Magnify thy mercies, O thou, &c.

Ver. 8. Hide me under the shadow of thy wings] This is a figurative expression, say some, taken from hens, who with great carefulness hide their chickens under their wings to protect them from birds of prey: see Matt. xxiii. 37. But it appears to me much more probable, that the idea is taken from the wings of the cherubim which overshadowed the mercy-seat. See Pf. lvii. i.

Ver. 10. They are inclosed in their own fat] This is a poetical or proverbial speech, to signify haughtiness, as caused by wealth or great prosperity; together with that indulgence of the sensual appetites, and disregard to the duties and doctrines of religion, which is a consequence of such haughtiness. *Jeshurun waxed fat, i. e. rich and prosperous; and the consequence was that he kicked; i. e. grew proud, insulting, and luxurious.* See Deut. xxxii 15.; and Pf. lxxiii. 7.

Ver. 11. They have now compassed us in our steps] Mudge renders this and the preceding verse differently: *ver. 10. They draw close their cords; with their mouth they speak exultingly: "We have succeeded now."* *ver. 11. They come about me, they set their eyes stooping down upon the earth.* The image here is taken from hunters, and the circumstances follow very properly. They compassed him about, they enclosed him in their net; "We have succeeded at last," they said; they came round him; they stooped down and looked earnestly at him; their eyes fixed, like a lion which is just leaping at his prey. See Houbigant.

Ver. 13. Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword] *Let thy sword deliver me from the wicked: thy hand, O Lord, from men: ver. 14. From these men who are of this world; &c.* Houbigant.

Ver. 14. From men of the world, which have their portion in this life] If we did enough remember, what it concerns wicked men to forget, *That they have their portion in this life,* and are therefore filled with the treasures of this world, upon which they have set their whole hearts, that they may have no pretence or title to that of the next; we should with pity look at the bargain that they have made for themselves; and tremble more at what they are to suffer hereafter, than be troubled at what for the

present they enjoy. When we see men languishing in fevers and dropsies, we do not envy them the pleasure that they have enjoyed in former riots and excesses; and when we see men wasted and faint in consumptions, or worn away by more noisome diseases, we do not envy them the pleasure of their former lusts and licence; and truly, if we did present to our clear thoughts the severe interest which bloody rebels and traitors must unavoidably pay for their short triumphs in this world, we could not think that their dying in the same prosperity they had lived in, and their leaving children to succeed them in their offices and estates, and to inherit their unrighteousness, was any addition or improvement of their happiness. *The children will complain of an ungodly father, because they shall be reproached for his sake;* says the Son of Sirach. Ecclus. xli. 7. No man has reason to be proud of leaving an estate behind him, and such children to inherit it, as will quickly grow ashamed of the memory of their own father: and to wicked men whose wisest ambition would be, that they and their actions might quickly be forgotten, it is the greatest curse which can befall them, that they leave a posterity to keep up their infamy, and to put the world often in mind of their unrighteousness. In a word, if, in the deepest deluge of misery which is ready to overwhelm us, we can keep such a confidence about us, as may carry us to God in honest and faithful prayer; such as may warrant us that God is pleased to look down upon us with favour; if, under those clouds of oppression, and in that night of affliction, He does discern that we do in truth, according to the best of our understanding, through his grace, guide ourselves by those rules which he has given us; he will take us so far into his own immediate protection, that we shall be so much satisfied in the consciousness of having pleased him, and done as he would have us, and suffered as he hath found best for us, that we shall only pity those instruments of his displeasure who have taken so deep a draught of joy in this world, that they have quenched all thirst of the inestimable comfort of that which is to come.

Ver. 15. I will behold, &c.] I will through righteousness's behold thy face. Bishop Hare has observed, that the sense of the latter part of this verse, according to the genius of

P S A L. XVIII.

David praiseth God for his manifold and marvellous blessings.

To the chief musician. *A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,*

I WILL love thee, O LORD, my strength.

2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

4 The sorrows of death compassed me,

the Hebrew poetry, is the same with the former. *By or through righteousness*, implies the condition upon which he expected the return of God's mercy here, and the eternal vision of him hereafter: while worldly men, with all the abundance and prosperity wherewith they felicitate themselves in this life, shall be for ever banished from the presence of God, and deprived of that beatific vision. All the ideas in this verse are so magnificent, that *the awaking* which David here speaks of, can be properly applied to nothing but his resurrection; especially when we compare this verse with the last of the 16th psalm. As *death* is frequently represented in Scripture under the notion of *sleep*; so is the *resurrection* under that of *awaking*. See John xi. 11. Others, however, think that David here refers to his approaching God's presence in the tabernacle in righteousness; and that, while the men of the world were filled and satisfied with the good things of it, he, *when ever he awoke*, i. e. every morning, applying to God in prayer, should be filled with the joy of God's countenance, and be satisfied with his likeness. The following paraphrase seems well to express the full meaning: "I will come to worship before thine ark with an honest and upright heart; and then I trust that my appearing in this manner before thee in this life, shall be an earnest of my more perfect enjoyment of thee in the other life; when I shall awake out of the grave, and be made like thee, and shall by this means be so happy that I shall have nothing further to desire."

REFLECTIONS.—In this psalm, David,

1. Begs a hearing of his righteous cause; and, as he spoke from the simplicity of his heart, he hoped for an answer of peace from the heart-searching God. *Note*; When our conscience bears witness to our inward simplicity, then have we confidence to approach God.

2. He humbly sues for the gracious interposition of God in his behalf, that his uprightness might be made manifest, and by God's providential dealings the sentence of his justice might appear. *Note*; When we are traduced of men, it is an unspeakable comfort to have the testimony of our conscience, and boldness to look up to the omniscient God.

3. He appeals to God, who had proved him in the furnace of affliction, and comforted him under the darkest times of his distress; that nothing was found in him, no allowed guile, no secret malice against his bitterest enemies; and God knew that it was his purpose both to withhold his lips from every evil word, and his hands from every evil work. *Note*; We must not only abstain from acts of

violence against those who injure us, but our lips must be kept with a bridle, that not an unkind reflection may be made concerning them.

4. He prays for continued support in this holy way, sensible that *it was not in man that walketh to direct his steps*; and that, if left but for a moment to himself, his feet must slide. *Note*; (1.) A deep sense of our own weakness and insufficiency is the surest way to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. (2.) Every Christian walks in a slippery path, and many wait for his halting; he needs, therefore, watch and pray, that he faint not. (3.) Enemies to God's people are rebels against himself, and will be reckoned with accordingly. (4.) In the eyes of a believer, God's loving-kindness appears marvellous, and not only in his first gracious call, when he brought him out of his wretched state of sin, but especially in his many recoveries when his feet were well nigh gone; and, when he gets to heaven, he will still more wonder at himself, and stand to all eternity admiring God's amazing love.

5. Sensible that his help stood only in the Lord, the Psalmist redoubles his importunate prayer, *Keep me as the apple of the eye*; with such care as we guard the coats of that sensible organ: *hide me under the shadow of thy wings*; with such tenderness as the hen gathers her chickens; or in such safety as if lodged on the mercy-seat under the wings of the cherubim. *Note*; In vain does Satan rage against those whom God secures. His enemies, who oppressed him, and compassed him about, are described in lively colours, bespeaking their sensuality, pride, malice, craft, and cruelty. *Note*; When a Christian is thus beset, he had need look about him, and above him, if he would be preserved from falling. In the view of his danger, David cries to God; *Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword*, the instrument that God often uses for correction or judgment; and, however, men may purpose, they can only move and act as they are permitted by him: *from the men which are thy hand*; held in it, restrained by it, or used according to God's purposes and designs. *Note*; If we receive unkindness from man, let us think whose hand he is; and, though the action in him be evil, justify God in his corrections.

Finally, the Psalmist concludes with his great hope and joy: not the world, nor the things of it, did he grasp after; a nobler ambition filled his heart, even to be like and enjoy the blessed God. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness*; either walking now in the ways of God's will and worship, and therein enjoying the present sense of his favour and love; or, as expecting God's appearing

and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.

5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice

out of his temple, and my cry came before him, *even* into his ears.

7 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

8 There went up a smoke out of his nos-

peating in the great day when he should be exculpated from the accusations laid to his charge; or rather intimating the manner in which he expected to see God's face with comfort; *I shall be satisfied* with this, and nothing less than this, *when I awake in thy likeness*, when, on and after the glorious resurrection-day, I shall be eternally perfected in holiness, and made happy in the constant vision and eternal fruition of thy blessed Self. O that such may be our sentiments, such our desires, such our prayers!

P S A L. XVIII.

Title. למנצח לעבד יהוה לדוד *lamnatfeach leebed Jehovah ledavid. To the chief musician. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord.*] After David had subdued his enemies, and was in peaceable possession of his kingdom, in grateful commemoration of the numerous favours of Divine Providence towards him, he composed this excellent psalm, that the memory of such goodness to him might be perpetuated throughout all generations. Bishop Hare has compared this psalm throughout with the other copy of it, 2 Sam. xxii., and Dr. Kennicott has collated the Oxford Hebrew manuscripts of both in his second Dissertation upon the printed text. To these, therefore, we rather refer the reader, than fill our notes with the observation of minute differences. The psalm begins with a solemn acknowledgment of God, as David's all-powerful protector and only refuge in danger, when he needed salvation from his enemies, ver. 1—3. He then describes the distresses that he had been in, ver. 4, 5, and the wonderful manner by which God, in answer to his prayer, was pleased to deliver him; in which the terrors and dreadful effects of the divine vengeance are described by the sublimest images and loftiest expressions, so as to surpass all imagination: ver. 6—19. He next proceeds to the mention of his own integrity, in his adherence to God, and strict observance of the law of Moses; declaring, that God's conduct towards himself, in thus rewarding him according to his righteousness, was agreeable to the settled method of his providence; and that all good men might expect from him the constant marks of his protection and favour: ver. 20—27. He then gratefully ascribes all his military power, strength, and prudence, his successes, victories, the enlargement of his dominions, and the destruction and submission of his enemies, to the favour and goodness of God: concluding the whole with a solemn thanksgiving for the mercy that God had shewn him, and the settlement of the crown and kingdom of Israel on his family for ever: ver. 28—50.

Ver. 2. The Lord is my rock, &c.] These words, by which David expresses his security under the protection of God's providence, will appear to be well chosen, if we consider that under Saul, when he was driven into banishment by him, he was forced to conceal himself in rocks and caverns, and to retreat for his safety to steep hills

and precipices, rendered by nature almost inaccessible. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 19. 25. xxiv. 2. He further declares, that God is his *buckler*, or shield; or who, as the shield in the foldier's hand, protected him from danger in those perilous wars in which he was engaged with his enemies. He adds, *The horn of my salvation*: i. e. He who by his power saves me from the destruction which my enemies intend; a metaphor taken from the horns of animals, which are their ornament and strength; by which they protect themselves, and assault those who oppose or injure them. The horn is frequently used by the sacred writers, and by the Arabians, to denote riches, strength, dignity, and power. See also Hor. Carm. Lib. iii. Od. 21. and Epod. vi. This verse contains a continued chain of metaphors, and is a sublime paraphrase on the first commandment; declaring that God, the God of Israel alone, was the foundation of the Royal Psalmist's confidence, and the author of his security and happiness. Dr. Chandler and Patrick.

Ver. 4. The sorrows of death, &c.] *The whirlpools of death in heaps rolled over me.* Chandler. In the parallel place of Samuel, it is, *The waves of death compassed me.* Dr. Delaney observes, that nothing can be a finer emblem of a host of men, in their several ranks, than the waves of the sea, succeeding one another in their natural order; and when we consider them pressing forward to the destruction of their adversaries, they may very properly be termed *waves of death*. The next clause is literally, *The torrents of Belial made me afraid*: i. e. "The forces of wicked men came down upon me like a torrent of water; as though they would have swept me away by their violence and fury; like an irresistible flood carrying all before it; and filled me with sudden terror." It is to be observed, that, by this translation, the two clauses in this verse properly correspond to each other.

Ver. 5. The sorrows of hell, &c.] *The nets of Hades, &c.* Chandler; with whom Houbigant and Mudge agree; for, by this rendering, the clauses again in this verse properly correspond. By the *cords and toils of hell*, he means, such as would have sent him into the state of the dead, if he had been taken by them. For he adds, *The snares of death prevented me*; i. e. "Deadly snares invaded me, and came on me unawares; so that I had no power or opportunity to prevent them." See ver. 18. and Chandler.

Ver. 7—15. Then the earth shook, &c.] In this, and the eight following verses, David describes, by the sublimest expressions and grandest terms, the majesty of God, and the awful manner in which he came to his assistance. The representation of the storm, in these verses, must be allowed by all skilful and impartial judges to be truly sublime and noble, and in the genuine spirit of poetry. The majesty of God, and the manner in which he is represented as coming to the aid of his favourite king, surrounded with all the powers of nature as his attendants and ministers, and arming, as it were, heaven and earth to fight his battles,

trils, and fire out of his mouth devoured : coals were kindled by it.

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came

down : and darkness *was* under his feet.

10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly ; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.

tles, and execute his vengeance, are described in the loftiest and most striking terms. The shaking of the earth, the trembling of the mountains and pillars of heaven ; the smoke which drove out of his nostrils ; the flames of devouring fire which flashed from his mouth ; the heavens bending down to convey him to the battle ; his riding upon a cherub, and rapidly flying on the wings of a whirlwind ; his concealing his majesty in the thick clouds of heaven ; the bursting of the lightnings from the horrid darkness ; the uttering his voice in peals of thunder ; the storm of fiery hail ; the melting of the heavens, and their dissolving into floods of tempestuous rains ; the cleaving of the earth, and disclosing the bottom of the hills, and the subterraneous channels or torrents of water, by the very breath of the nostrils of the Almighty ;—are all of them circumstances which create admiration, excite a kind of horror, and exceed every thing of this nature that is to be found in any of the remains of heathen antiquity. See Longinus on the Sublime, sect. 9., and Hesiod's description of Jupiter fighting against the Titans, which is one of the grandest things in all pagan antiquity, though, upon comparison, it will be found infinitely short of this description of the Psalmist ; throughout the whole of which God is represented as a mighty warrior, going forth to fight the battles of David, and highly incensed at the opposition which his enemies made to his power and authority. When he descended to the engagement, the very heavens bowed down to render his descent more awful ; his military tent was substantial darkness ; the voice of his thunder was the warlike alarm which sounded to the battle ; the chariot in which he rode were the thick clouds of heaven, conducted by cherubs, and carried on by the irresistible force and rapid wings of an impetuous tempest ; and the darts and weapons that he employed were thunder-bolts, lightnings, fiery hail, deluging rains, and stormy winds ! No wonder that, when God thus arose, all his enemies should be scattered, and those who hated him should flee before him ! It does not appear, from any part of David's history, that there was any such storm as is here described, which proved destructive to his enemies, and salutary to himself. There might indeed have been such a one, though there is no particular mention of it ; unless it may be thought that something of this nature is intimated in the account given of David's second battle with the Philistines, 2 Sam. v. 23, 24. It is undoubted, however, that the storm is represented as real, though David, in describing it, has heightened and embellished it with all the ornaments of poetry : see Chandler, Delaney, and Lowth's 9th Prelection.

Ver. 8. *There went up a smoke out of his nostrils*] Or, *There ascended into his nostrils a smoke*, as the words, literally rendered, signify. The ancients placed the seat of anger in the *nose*, or nostrils, because that passion, when it grows warm and violent, discovers itself by the heated vehement breath which proceeds from them. Hence the physiognomists considered open wide nostrils as a sign of an angry

fiery disposition. This description of a smoke arising into, and a fire breaking forth from the nostrils of God, denotes, by a poetical figure, the greatness of his anger and indignation. *Fire out of his mouth devoured*, means that consuming fire issued out of his mouth. *Coals were kindled by it*, we render the next clause ; but the words do not mean that fire proceeding from God kindled coals, but that burning coals issued from his mouth ; and it should be rendered, *Living coals from his mouth burned or consumed around him*. Chandler.

Ver. 9. *He bowed the heavens also, and came down*] He made the heavens bend under him, when he descended to take vengeance on his enemies. The Psalmist seems here to express the appearance of the divine Majesty in a glorious cloud, descending from heaven, which underneath was substantially dark, but above bright and shining with an amazing lustre, and which, by its gradual approach to the earth, would appear as though the heavens themselves were bending down, and approaching towards us.

Ver. 10. *He rode upon a cherub, and did fly*] i. e. As it is immediately explained, *Yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind*. God was in the storm, and, by the ministry of angels, guided the course of it, and drove it on with such an impetuous force, as nothing could withstand. He “rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.” Angels are, in a peculiar sense, the attendants and messengers of the Almighty, whom he employs as his ministers in effecting many of those great events which take place in the administration of his providence ; and particularly such as manifest his immediate interposition in the extraordinary judgments which he inflicts for the punishment of sinful nations. See Ps. ciii. 20. civ. 4. The *cherub* is particularly mentioned as an emblem of the Divine Presence, and especially as employed in supporting and conveying the chariot of the Almighty, when he is represented as riding in his majesty through the firmament of heaven :

—Forth rush'd, with whirlwind sound,
The chariot of paternal Deity ;
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
Itself instinct with spirit, but convoy'd
By four cherubic shapes. Paradise Lost, b. vi.

This seems to be the image intended to be conveyed to us in the place before us : *He rode upon a cherub, and flew upon the wings of the wind* ; i. e. The cherub supported, and led on the tempest, in which the Almighty rode, as in his chariot. This is agreeable to the office elsewhere ascribed to the cherubim. Thus they supported the mercy-seat, which was peculiarly the throne of God under the Jewish economy. What confirms me in this sentiment is, that God is expressly said to *make the clouds his chariot*, Ps. civ. 3. and to *ride upon a swift cloud*, Isai. xix. 1. ; so that riding upon a cherub, and riding *a swift cloud*, is riding in the cloud, as his chariot, supported and guided by the ministry of the cherubim. The next clause in the parallel place of Samuel is, *And he was seen upon the wings of the*

11 He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him *were* dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

12 At the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed, hail-stones and coals of fire.

13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail-

stones and coals of fire.

14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.

15 Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

the wind. The word rendered *was seen*, might be translated, *appeared as a warrior*, or *fought upon the wings of the wind*; which conveys a noble representation of God, as riding in his chariot directed by cherubs, and borne up by the swift wings of a tempest, as a mighty warrior going to engage in battle for the assistance of his favourite king: in which view the passage is more striking than in the Psalms; where, however, we should observe, that, though we use the word *fly* in both clauses, yet the original words are different; and the verse might be rendered, *He rode upon a cherub, and flew; yea, as an eagle he rapidly flew upon the wings of the wind*; the latter expression conveying a stronger image than the former. See Exod. xix. 4. Deut. xxxii. 11. and Chandler.

Ver. 11. He made darkness his secret place.] His tent. Chandler. God is frequently represented in the sacred writings as surrounded by clouds. See Pf. xcvi. 2. Deut. iv. 11. This representation in the place before us is peculiarly proper, as thick heavy clouds, deeply charged, and with lowering aspects, are always the forerunners and attendants of a tempest, and greatly heighten the horrors of the appearance; and the representation of them, as spread around the Almighty for his pavilion and tent, is truly poetical and grand.

Ver. 12. At the brightness that was before him.] At his lightning his clouds swelled, and burst out into hailstones and coals of fire. Schultens, Chandler, &c. The meaning is, that at the brightness or lightning which proceeded from God, his clouds *fermented*, i. e. being rarefied by the heat, swelled and boiled over. Thus Hesiod represents the whole earth, the currents of the ocean, and the great sea, as fermenting and boiling, when Jupiter threw abroad his thunder and lightning. See Theog. ver. 695, 696. In the former part of this description, the clouds are represented as condensed, heavy, and lowering, ready to burst out with all the fury of a tempest; and here, as beginning to disburthen and discharge themselves, by the eruption of the lightning in fire, flames, and hailstones, mixed: the abrupt manner in which the *burning coals and hailstones* are mentioned, points out the sudden and impetuous fall of them. The word גַּחֲלֵי gachalei, rendered *coals*, signifies *living, burning coals*. Where the lightning fell, it devoured all before it, and turned whatever it touched into burning embers. Chandler.

Ver. 13. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, &c.] The former verse mentioned the lightning, with its effects: this gives us the report of the thunder, and the increasing storm of hail and fire which attended it; and the omission of the hail and fire after the thunder, would have made it a sort of *brutum fulmen*, harmless thunder,

and almost disarmed the artillery of the Almighty of its vengeance. I cannot, therefore, but wonder, that some learned men should imagine, that these words were here taken unnecessarily from the former verse by careless transcribers. It is indeed said, that the fire and hail in this last verse are omitted in the parallel place in Samuel. This is true; but then the whole description there differs from this in the Psalms; as the reader will see by comparing the two places together. See Chandler, and Kennicott's Dissert. vol. i.

Ver. 14. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them.] Yea, he sent out his darts, and scorched them: he brandished his thunder-bolts, and dissolved them; i. e. the heavens. Schultens. Dr. Chandler approves of this version of Schultens; only instead of *scorched*, in the former clause, he renders it, *made the heavens overflow*: the word פִּזְץ putz, is used to denote the inundation caused by rivers overflowing their banks, and the pouring down of large showers from the heavens; and, as applied to the heavens, here, means, that by the thunder and lightning the clouds were made to overflow and fall with such violence, as that the heavens themselves seemed to be dissolving down in rain. Lucretius finely compares the dissolution of the clouds in rain, by the heat of the sun, to the melting of wax by fire, lib. vi. v. 510. The Greek and Latin poets frequently speak of thunder and lightning as the *arrows of Jupiter*. See Chandler, and Schultens, Orig. Heb. vol. i. p. 131.

Ver. 15. Then the channels of water were seen.] This is a description of the effects of the earthquake, by which the earth was riven or rent in sunder, and such clefts made in it, that the subterraneous passages of the waters were discovered by the eruption of vast quantities of water proceeding from the breaches of it, as have frequently been the effects of violent earthquakes. In that great one which happened at Jamaica in the year 1692, in some places out of the clefts issued forth whole rivers of water, spouting up a great height into the air, which seemed to threaten a deluge even twelve miles from the sea; in others, there were formed new lakes of water covering a thousand acres. Many other instances of the like sort might be mentioned. These dreadful eruptions of water may well be called the *channels*, or rather *torrents of water*, or of the sea, which discovered themselves as the effect of the earthquake. The Psalmist adds, *The foundations of the world were discovered*; i. e. such large and deep chasms, or apertures, were made by the violence of the shock, that one might almost see the very foundations; or, as Jonah calls them, the *bottoms*, or rather the *extremities of the mountains*, in the bottom of the sea. These may be well called *the foundations of the world*, as their bases run deep

16 He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.

17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.

19 He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

21 For I have kept the ways of the

LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

22 For all his judgments *were* before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.

23 I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.

24 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.

25 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;

26 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself

deep into the earth, and thereby add greatly to the security and stability of it. Chandler. Dr. Delaney, in his first volume, b. i. c. 11. of his Life of David, has made a judicious and pleasing comparison between this description, and a fine passage of much the same kind in the first Georgic of Virgil, to which we must refer the reader.

Ver. 16. *He sent from above, &c.*] This may either denote, in general, that God aided and assisted him by his divine power, or that he sent his angels from heaven, to protect and rescue him from the many dangers that surrounded him; which he figuratively calls *drawing him out of many waters*; afflictions and great calamities being frequently represented by deep waters and floods in the sacred writings. See Chandler, and Lowth's 6th Prelection. Theodoret observes, that the Psalmist tells us what waters he means by the next words: *He delivered me from my strong enemies*; i. e. from Saul and other his persecutors.

Ver. 18. *They prevented me in the day of my calamity*] i. e. "came on me suddenly, unawares, when I was unprotected and helpless; and must have destroyed me, had not God upheld and supported me when I was in danger of perishing." God was to the Psalmist *for a staff*, to support him. What a staff is to one who is ready to fall, the means of recovering and preserving him, that was God to David in the time of his extremity.

Ver. 19. *He brought me forth also into a large place*] The Psalmist expresses himself much in the same manner, but with an addition which explains the nature of the phrase, Ps. xxxi. 8. *Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.* David was several times shut up in close confinement in rocks and caverns. In opposition to this, he says, God had brought him into a large place; had set him at liberty, and placed him in such happy circumstances, as that he could live and act with the utmost freedom, without any constraint of his enemies, or danger to his person. It may also be observed, that the eastern writers denote any person's condition in life by his *steps* or *goings*. Hence, narrow or straitened steps denote a state of distress and great affliction; and large unconfined steps, the contrary state of prosperity and plenty; so that he praises God for advancing

him to great honour and prosperity, by settling him on the throne, and enabling him to conquer all his enemies. See Chandler, and Schultens on Job, xviii. 7.

Ver. 20. *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness*] In this and the five following verses, David declares his own integrity, and that he had not departed from, but conscientiously observed, the precepts and commands which God had given him by the law of Moses; and that therefore God, in the deliverance which he had vouchsafed him, and peaceably establishing him on the throne of Israel, had testified his approbation of him, and abundantly rewarded him. His behaviour to Saul was exemplary; and there is no instance in this period of his life that can be alleged against him, in which he violated the known precepts of religion and virtue, enjoined by that constitution which he was under; and therefore, conscious of his integrity, thus far, he glories and rejoices, that God, who was witness to it, had thus bountifully rewarded it.

Ver. 23. *I kept myself from mine iniquity*] The affix *'jod*, my to the noun *avon* may probably be merely supplemental, and not point out any particular sin to which David was especially inclined. The Chaldee paraphrase renders it, *He was the saviour of my soul from sin*; and the Syriac version, *I preserved myself from sin*; or, if it was intended to point out any such sin, it may be difficult to determine what it was. David certainly was of a warm, eager, hasty disposition: this appears throughout the whole of his character: and when his passions were raised, and in the heat of his temper, he was liable to be transported into unjustifiable proceedings; yet we find that in this respect he had wonderfully the mastery over himself. This appeared in his whole behaviour towards Saul; and though, in the affair of Nabal, he vowed a cruel revenge for an outrageous affront, he immediately grew cool when reason took place, and blessed God that he had been preserved from executing the purpose which he had formed. This violence of temper may be what he calls *his own iniquity*; which he had learned to conquer, and from the guilty effects of which, he reflects with comfort that he had been enabled to keep himself. Chandler.

Ver. 25. *With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful*] In this and the two next verses, David lays down the general

pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.

27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.

28 For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

29 For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.

30 *As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*

31 For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God?

32 *It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*

33 He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.

general method of the procedure of God's moral providence and government, which will be in the issue agreeable to the moral character and conduct of men themselves. *With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful: similar to that of our Lord: Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. With an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; an invariable friend to his integrity; just to reward it, and faithful in all thy promises to encourage it. With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; the lover of purity, righteousness, and truth, and ever acting towards those whose character this is, according to the perfect rectitude and unspotted purity of thy own nature. But with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.* The word *שָׁקַף ikkesb*, rendered, *froward* signifies one of a perverse disposition, who twists and twines himself just as his humour, passions, and interest lead him; or a crafty wily person, who accustoms himself to all the arts of deceit. With one of this character, the Psalmist says of God, *Thou wilt shew thyself froward; as we render the original: it properly signifies to wrestle, and should be rendered, "Thou wilt shew that thou canst wrestle with, and supplant them too."* The meaning therefore is, that God will deal with designing, crafty, perverse men according to their deserts, disappoint them in all their subtlest devices, and cause them to fall by those very wiles by which they endeavour to deceive and ruin others. See Lev. xvi. 23, 24. Chandler, and Schultens' Infit. Ling. Heb. 482.

Ver. 28. Thou wilt light my candle] i. e. Advance me to honour, and increase my prosperity; and make me continually joyful by thy favour. Nothing more usual among the Oriental writers than the representing any person or family by a lamp enlightening the whole house. See 1 Kings, xi. 36. xv. 4. Job, xviii. 5, 6.

Ver. 29. For by thee I have run through a troop, &c.] David mentions this as one instance of God's lighting up his lamp; or his purpose to advance him to the greatest splendours of royal majesty: his beating the troops of his enemies, and his reducing some remarkable city or fortress; both of them circumstances which render men glorious in the eyes of the world. David soon after his settlement on the throne drove the Jebusite garrison out of Jerusalem, and reduced the city to his obedience, making it the future capital of his kingdom. And I think he must refer to these actions, or to his two victories over the Philistines, mentioned 2 Sam. v. 17, &c. because I apprehend this Psalm was composed soon after he had introduced the ark into Jerusalem. David's habitual piety should be here remarked; as he ascribes all his successes to the assistance of God, and in the two next verses celebrates—The unerring

rectitude of his Providence: *As for God, his way is perfect, in every thing just and kind:—The truth of his promises; the word of the Lord is tried, free from deceit, as gold refined by fire, and certainly to be performed:—And that powerful protection which he affords to good men; He is a buckler, a sure defence to all those who trust in him.* To this he could bear witness from his own experience; and therefore he breaks out in that just acknowledgment, ver. 31. *Who is God, save Jehovah? or, who is a Rock,—who can give absolute security from all dangers, save our God?* He then goes on to enumerate the particular favours which God had bestowed on himself, and the various perils that he had been in, under which he experienced the divine protection. Chandler. Dr. Delaney advances a conjecture, that David composed the greater part of this Psalm after the deliverance he obtained from Saul's messengers, when they were sent to his house to take him, and when he was let down by Michal out of the window, and escaped over the garden-wall: But, as we think the above interpretation of Dr. Chandler very satisfactory, we shall only refer such of our readers as are curious to enter into the subject, to the above quoted part of the *Life of David*. Some render the latter clause, *By my God have I taken a fort.*

Ver. 32. It is God that girdeth me, &c.] The form of speaking here seems to be taken from the military belt which officers wore as the emblem of authority and valour; and the meaning is, that God distinguished him by inspiring him with a superior spirit of courage, and the highest resolution and fortitude in war. *He maketh my way perfect,* means, he directeth me to those methods which secure my success. A man's way in the pursuit of any end is perfect, when the means that he uses to attain it are proper and direct, and will finally render him successful in it: and thus God made David's way perfect, as he gave him the surest directions how to act, and prospered him in all his measures to support the dignity of his crown and government. Chandler. Green renders it, *He maketh my warfare complete:* and he endeavours to prove on Psal. ii. 12. that the word *דָּרַךְ derek* is frequently used in this sense.

Ver. 33. He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, &c.] i. e. "Hath endowed me with agility and vigour, and made me swift to run, so that I can easily ascend the highest hills." This was reckoned a very honourable qualification among the ancient warriors; who, as they generally fought on foot, were enabled by their agility and swiftness speedily to run from place to place, give orders, attack their enemies, defend their friends, or for any other purposes that the service

34 He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.

36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.

37 I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.

38 I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.

39 For thou hast girded me with strength unto battle: thou hast subdued under me

those that rose up against me.

40 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.

41 They cried, but *there was* none to save them: *even* unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

42 Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.

43 Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.

44 As soon as they hear of me, they shall

service might require of them; many instances of which we have in the battles of Homer and Virgil. See 2 Sam. i. 23. 1 Chron. xii. 8. This qualification was peculiarly useful to David, as the country of Judæa, and some of those wherein he was obliged to make war, were very mountainous and steep.

Ver. 34. A bow of steel is broken by mine arms.] My arms have bent the bow of steel. Chandler. He makes my arms to be like a brazen bow. Houbigant and Mudge: but Dr. Chandler's rendering is more agreeable to the Hebrew. In the foregoing part of the verse, the Psalmist acknowledges that God taught his hands to war, of which he gives an instance in the latter; that his arms were able to bend and draw together even a brazen or steely bow, and to use it in his wars against his enemies: this was an argument of great strength. The story of Ulysses' bow, which none of the suitors were able to draw, is well known. See Odyss. lib. xxi. ver. 409. Dr. Delaney, speaking of the excellency of this composition, observes, "What is very singular, David had found out the secret of most effectually perpetuating his own praise, by perpetuating that of his Maker: while he labours to make the praises of God glorious, he makes his own eminent above that of all other mortals. A single instance will evince this: we never should have known that David was one of the swiftest and strongest of mankind, if his own thanksgivings had not told us so; if he had not blessed God for giving him the swiftness of the hart, and the strength to break a bow of steel. It has been observed by writers of all times, how much dignity a graceful mien and person have always given to kings and commanders. David had these advantages added to his other accomplishments, beyond most men. We cannot help forming to ourselves some idea, however imperfect, of the persons whom we admire, and mine of David's person, continues Dr. Delaney, hath, I own, been modelled by that of Claudian's Stilico:

The moment we behold you, we admire;
The radiant eye proclaims the valiant chief;
The limbs so siz'd and shap'd as poets paint
Heroes and demi-gods, less finish'd forms.
Thro' every city as you pass rever'd,
All rise respectful, and with joy give place.

CLAUD. de Laude Stil. lib. i."

I would just observe, that the *radiant eye*, &c. in this version of Delaney's, by no means expresses the beauty of Claudian's *Celsi nitor igneus oris;—the fiery splendor of his lofty brow.*

Ver. 35. Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation, &c.] i. e. "The salvation which thou hast afforded me, hath been my constant protection and security; and thy gentleness; i. e. (as I think the words may be rendered) that gentleness, forbearance, and freedom from the spirit of malice and revenge, with which thou hast blessed me, hath increased my greatness; referring to his conduct towards Saul, which God approved and highly rewarded." Chandler.

Ver. 36. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me.] See the note on ver. 18. "Thou hast brought me out of my distress; given me great prosperity;" and my feet do not slip: i. e. my happiness continues unmoved.

Ver. 39. Thou hast girded me with strength unto battle.] "Thou hast inspired my forces with resolution and vigour, and thereby hast subdued under me those who rise up against me: i. e. my enemies, who joined in battle to oppress me."

*Ver. 40. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies.] As for mine enemies, thou givest me their back. Houbigant. Mudge, &c. The word ערף *oreph*, rendered neck, signifies the back part of the neck, and therefore is equivalent to back, as the LXX also translate it. Thou givest me their back; that is, puttest them to flight. See Exod. xxiii. 27.*

Ver. 42. I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.] As the mire in the streets I trampled them down. Chandler. I beat them flat. Mudge.

Ver. 43. Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people.] From that conflict between the tribes, or the civil war, which was raised by Abner in favour of Ishbosheth, and from the invasions of the Philistines, who attacked him soon after his succession to the kingdom; and thereby put him into peaceable possession of the throne, and made him the head of those nations, which were become tributary by his victories over them. See 2 Sam. viii. 1 Chron. xviii.

Ver. 44. The strangers shall submit themselves unto me.] The Hebrew is literally, The sons of the stranger have lied

obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.

45 The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.

46 The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.

47 *It is* God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me.

48 He delivereth me from mine enemies:

yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.

49 Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.

50 Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

lied unto me; "The foreign nations that I have conquered have promised me their obedience, and, dissembling their hatred and hostility, have submitted to my government; offered me their service, and paid me through compulsion the tribute that I demanded of them." Nothing can argue a more wretched and servile subjection than to be forced to compliment a conqueror at the expence of truth and liberty; and with a lying mouth, and treacherous heart, to give him assurances of fidelity. Chandler.

Ver. 45. The strangers shall fade away, &c.] "They shall either lose their courage, and all power to resist, and their prosperity shall decay, and come to an utter end; or they themselves shall fall and gradually perish, till there be few or none of them left to oppose me." See Isa. i. 30. xl. 7. Exod. xviii. 18. Psal. xxxvii. 2. It is added, *They shall be afraid out of their close places.* Grotius's comment is, "They shall suspect their safety in the very places they flew to for refuge." The verb *חרג* *charag*, is used only in this place in the Old Testament. The force of it seems to be, to be *straitened*; and the meaning of the clause, "They are straitened and distressed in the places where they shut themselves up, so that they are forced to surrender them into my hands." See Chandler, and Schultens.

Ver. 50. Great deliverance giveth he, &c.] Literally, *He magnifies the salvations of his king*; they are such as are great and wonderful in themselves, and as they add a dignity and lustre to the king, on whom they are bestowed; there being nothing which can tend more to advance the honour, and heighten the reverence due to a prince, than to consider him as the favourite of Providence, highly distinguished by the divine protection and care, and delivered by it out of numerous dangers which threatened his prosperity and life; except we had that prince's thorough sense of the greatness of his obligations, and his piety in the grateful acknowledgment of them. David was eminent for both. Chandler. I would just observe, in conclusion, that though the passages, ver. 42, &c. in which David speaks of himself as being made head of the nations, allude primarily to his victories; yet, in the secondary sense, they allude to his Divine Son, and to the conversion of the Gentiles to his faith; in which sense they are applied by the apostles themselves. *To his seed for evermore*, in this verse, must also be applied to the Messiah, whose kingdom shall never have an end.

REFLECTIONS.—David may here be called the servant of the Lord, as representing him who took upon himself

the form of a servant when he was made in the likeness of men; and his dangers were greater, and his deliverances far more glorious, than those which the king of Israel experienced.

1. The Psalmist, in the person of the Redeemer, expresses his confidence in God, his love to him, and constant dependance upon his salvation in every time of trouble.

2. He magnifies the glorious interposition that he had experienced under the most dangerous and threatening circumstances, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death; when ungodly men, mighty as the stormy waves, Jews and Heathens, conspired to destroy him, when pains of hell tormented his spirit, and death in its most horrid shapes seized on his body; in that hour when the powers of darkness summoned their collected force to shake the confidence of the great Mediator, then, with strong crying and tears, he made supplication and was heard. The trembling earth, and rending rocks, bespoke the wrath of God against the murderers of his Son, and swift vengeance soon awaked to overtake them. Judgments, sudden as the lightning, terrible as thunder, and consuming as fire, fell upon the devoted city and people where he was crucified; the very foundations of their commonwealth were razed, and desolations spread on every side. *Note*; More terrible judgments await the sinner in the day of God; when all who have rejected, like those Jews, his great salvation, and by their sins have crucified the Son of God afresh, will see him bow the heavens and come down to take final and eternal vengeance on his enemies.

3. He speaks with exultation of his deliverance, and the glory to which he was advanced. God drew him from the hands of his enemy, delivered him from the power of Satan, and loosed the bands of death, raising him from the grave triumphant, and causing him to ascend to his right hand in glory, because he delighted in him. *Note*; God delights in his Son, and all who are members of his body mystical are interested in the same divine regard; and, however deep the afflictions with which they are now exercised, the faithful shall shortly be exalted with their triumphant Lord and Saviour.

4. Though David's cause was righteous, and his heart simple before God, yet is our most righteous Saviour more particularly adverted to here. His exaltation and glory is the reward of a righteousness absolutely perfect; for in him was no sin, nor guile found in his mouth. *Note*; They who have an interest in Christ, have a right to his

G

merits:

P S A L. XIX.

The creatures shew God's glory; the word, his grace. David prayeth for grace.

To the chief musician, A Psalm of David.

THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun;

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth is from the end of the

merits: but while his afflicted and faithful people are saved, and they who suffer with Jesus are glorified together with him, the froward and perverse, the proud, self-righteous, and unhumbled, shall be brought low, and feel the wrath of an offended God.

5. David had experienced many dark providences, many dark nights of spiritual affliction, and many foes without, as well as fears within; but all vanished when God, his help and strength, lightened his darkness, and gave him victory over all his enemies. The Son of David found deeper distress, and greater foes; yet, though his eyes were sealed in death, and his burning light gone out in obscurity, he awaked, and, like the sun, shone brighter in glory, when the dark cloud had passed over him. God helped him, (for, as man, he needed divine support,) and none of his enemies could stand before him. He ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, having spoiled principalities and powers; and now he reigns in glory everlasting, exalted in the most eminent sense to be head of the heathen, all power being given him in heaven and in earth; and in a peculiar manner he is the head of his church, gathered out of all the nations of the world.

In the view of these mercies the Psalmist exalts the Divine Majesty, blessing and praising him for such exertions of his power and faithfulness. And Jesus thus thanked his Father, for hearing and helping him; and in his church unceasing praise will be for ever given for this great salvation, both of the head and of the several members.

P S A L. XIX.

Title.] למנצח מוזמר לרוד lamnatfcach mizmor ledavid.

The author in this Psalm, as in many other places, considers the works of nature, and the words of revelation, as both of them laws of the same hand, and standing firm by the same authority; both highly perfect in their kind, and containing great matter of instruction; one for the whole world, the other for God's people, and himself particularly. Mudge. The piety of this Psalm, says Bishop Sherlock, is so natural, and yet so exalted, so easy to be understood, and so adapted to move the affections, that it is hardly possible to read it with any attention, without feeling something of the same spirit by which it was indited. The holy king begins with the works of the creation, to magnify the power and wisdom of the Creator: they are a perpetual instruction to mankind; every day and every night speak his goodness, and by their regular and constant vicissitude set forth the excellency of wisdom by which they are ordered. This book of nature is written

in every language, and lies open to all the world: The works of the creation speak in the common voice of reason, and want no interpreter to explain their meaning; but are to be understood by people of all languages upon the face of the earth. From these works in general, he singles out one, to stand as a testimony of the power of his Maker: The sun is the great spirit of the world, the life which animates these lower parts: How constant and unwearied in his course! how large his circuit, to impart light and genial heat to every dark corner of the earth! *He is as a bridegroom, &c.*

Ver. 1. The heavens declare] Tell, or preach, according to the force of the Hebrew. This language of the heavens is so plain, and their characters are so legible, that all, even the most barbarous nations, who have no skill either in languages or letters, are able to understand and read what they proclaim. What can be so plain and so clear, says Tully, as when we behold the heavens, and view the heavenly bodies, that we should conclude there is some deity, of a most excellent mind, by whom these things are governed? A present and Almighty God? which he who doubts of, I do not understand why he should not as well doubt whether or no there be a sun that shines. See De Nat. Deor. lib. ii. cap. 2. and Derham's Astro-Theology, at the beginning.

Ver. 3. There is no speech, &c.] They have neither speech nor words: without these is their voice heard. Or, There is not a word or speech of theirs, the utterance of which is not heard.—See Green, and Vitring. Observ. Sac. p. 841.

Ver. 4. Their line is gone out, &c.] Their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their report, &c. Nold. 881. 926. Carpzov. Crit. S. Vitring. Obs. Sac. 841. See Rom. x. 18. The meaning is, "They are legible all the world over." He considers the sun, and other luminaries, as letters or characters placed in the expanded volume of the heavens, to be read by all the world.

A tabernacle for the sun] The nuptials of the Jews, and other eastern nations, were celebrated with great magnificence and splendor. They were held under a tent, or canopy, erected for that purpose, to which custom David here alludes; as he does in the next verse to the custom of the bridegroom's going out at midnight with lamps and torches. The passage will receive great light from our Saviour's parable of the wife and foolish Virgins.

Ver. 5. Rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race] This is another comparison taken from the vehemence and force with which a warrior runs toward his enemy; and is not, as some expositors fancy, an allusion to the races so famous among

heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring

for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

among the Greeks and Romans; for those sports were of a much later date than the time of David.

Ver. 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul } *Restoring*
Refresbing } *the soul.* The connection seems to be this: From the mighty scene and prospect of nature in the former verses, the Psalmist turns his thoughts to the consideration of the still greater works of grace. The rational world, as in itself the noblest, so has it been the more peculiar care of Providence to preserve and adorn it. The sun knows its course, and has always trod the path marked out by its Creator. The sea keeps its old channel, and in its utmost fury remembers the first law of its Maker, *hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.* But freedom and reason, subject to no such restraint, have produced infinite variety in the rational world. Of all the creatures, man only could forget his Maker and himself, and prostitute the honour of both by robbing God of the obedience due to him, and by submitting himself a slave to the elements of the world. When he looked up to the heavens, and saw the glory of the sun and stars, instead of praising the Lord of all, he foolishly said, "These are thy gods, O man!" When man was thus lost in ignorance and superstition, God manifested himself again, gave him a law to direct his will and inform his reason, and to teach him in all things how to pursue his happiness [and grace to fulfil that law, and obtain that happiness]. This was a kind of second creation; a work which calls as much both for our wonder and our praise as any or all the works of nature [and much more]; and thus the holy Psalmist sings the triumphs of grace, and extols the mercy and power of God, in restoring mankind from the bondage of ignorance and idolatry. *The law of the Lord is perfect, &c.* To this divine law the sinner owes the *conversion of his soul*; to the light of God's word *the simple* owes his *wisdom*; nay, even the pleasures of life and all the solid comforts we enjoy flow from the same living stream: *The statutes of the Lord do rejoice the heart*, as well as *enlighten the eyes*; and not only shew us the dangers and miseries of iniquity, and, by shewing, teach us to avoid them, but do lead us likewise to certain happiness and joy for evermore: *for in keeping them there is great reward.* Bishop Sherlock.

Ver. 10. Sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb] There is no great difference made among us between the delicacy of honey in the comb, and after its separation from it. We may therefore be at a loss to enter into the energy of this expression; or to express it with the same emphasis as our translation does the preceding clause. *Sweeter than honey, yea, than the honey-comb*; which last, it should seem from

the turn of thought of the Psalmist, is as much to be preferred to honey, as the finest gold is to that of a more impure nature. But this will appear in a clearer light, if the diet and relish of the present *Mores of West Barbary* be thought to resemble that of the times of the Psalmist; for they esteem honey a wholesome breakfast, and "the more delicious that which is in the comb, with the young bees in it, before they come out of their cells, whilst they still look milk white." See Halley's *Miscell. Curios.* vol. iii. p. 382. The author of the *Observations*, however, thinks this can hardly be all. He remarks, that there are three very different words translated by us *honey-comb*, one of which he supposes to mean *the honey-comb*, properly speaking: The second *זֶבֶב* *zubb*, used here, and *Prov. xvi. 24.* he supposes to be the name given to the plant which produces one of the other kinds of honey; and when I consider, says he, that only David and Solomon speak of this; that the Psalmist supposes its *drippings* are as much preferable to honey, as refined gold to unrefined; and compare the words of the other sacred writer—*Pleasant words are as an honey-comb*; or as the *honey-zubb*, *sweet to the soul, and health to the bones*,—with the expressions of William, Archbishop of Tyre; "It produces canes from whence sugar is made, one of the most precious things in the world for the use of men, and extremely necessary for their health;"—I am very much inclined to think these two passages speak, the one of the *sugar* or *syrup*, the other of the *cane*. The *honey of dates* (which, though inferior to that of bees, is, it seems, very pleasant) is left to answer the third Hebrew word, which occurs *Prov. v. 3. xxiv. 13. Cant. iv. 11.* See more in the *Observations*, p. 162, and Dr. Shaw's *Travels*, p. 339. in the note.

Ver. 12. Who can understand his errors?] While we praise and adore God for his mercies, it seems impossible to forget one great circumstance which affects both them and ourselves; I mean, how undeserved they are: It is a reflection which, like the pillar of the cloud that waited on the Israelites, casts light and beauty upon the mercies of God, and darkness and confusion of face upon ourselves. Can we help thinking, that, notwithstanding God has thus secured and hedged us about with a law which is perfect, with commandments that are pure, yet still our own weakness is perpetually betraying us into error; our folly or our wickedness driving us into sins more in number than either we can or, too often, care to remember? The royal Psalmist saw the justness of this reflection; and, while his heart glowed with the sense of God's unbounded mercies, he turned short upon himself with this complaint, *Who can understand his errors?* This complaint is followed

13 Keep back thy fervant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then I shall be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

by a fervent prayer to God for pardon and protection: From the prospect of the power and goodness of God, and our own weakness and misery, the soul [through divine grace] easily melts into sorrow and devotion; lamenting what it feels, and deploring what it wants, from the hand which only is able to save and to redeem. *Cleanse thou me from secret faults.* He calls his faults *secret*, not with design to extenuate his crimes, or as if he thought the actions he had now in view of so doubtful a nature, that it was not easily to be judged whether they should be placed among the sinful or the indifferent circumstances of his life; and therefore, if they were *faults*, they were *secret ones*, such as stole from him without the consent and approbation of his mind; but *secret* he calls them, with respect to their number. So often had he offended, that his memory was too frail to keep an exact register of all his errors. But though they were secret to him, yet well he knew that God had placed them in the light of his countenance; and therefore, though he could neither number nor confess them, he begs that they might not be imputed to, or rise up in judgment against his soul. This sense is well expressed in our old translation: *Who can tell how oft he offendeth? Oh cleanse thou me from my secret faults!* Bishop Sherlock.

Ver. 13. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins Though our sins are more in number than the hairs of our head; yet some there are which stand distinguished by an uncommon guilt, and will always be present to our minds, whenever we approach the throne of grace for pardon. These we should particularly lament; against these we should particularly pray, when we seek to God for strength and assistance. In this strain the holy Psalmist continues his devotions. *Keep back thy servant also, &c.* Bishop Sherlock. Mudge renders the last clause, *And clean from great defecion*: and Fenwick, *And be pure from great offences.*

Ver. 14. Let the words of my mouth, &c. Having thus extolled his Maker for the greatness of his power and mercy, and humbled himself for the number and heinousness of his iniquities, he closes this scene of praise and devotion; *Let the words of my mouth, &c. be acceptable—My strength and my redeemer*; words which seem prophetically to relate to Christ; as if he had said, "Thou wilt redeem me from the power of the devil, through the merits of Christ;" or rather, "Thou, who hast already redeemed me by the sacrifice of Christ, who was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. xiii. 8.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, All things are full of God; and, to a mind disposed to contemplate, every object around him proclaims the glory of the great Creator.

1. The visible heavens, and the ethereal sky spread over us, declare the power, and display the wisdom, of the *han*' which made them. The regular successions of night and day speak to every people and language the voice of

instruction. The glorious sun that shines, proclaims the brighter glory of him who made it, and daily causes it to go forth as a bridegroom from his chamber in the morning to run as a giant to its meridian height, and then at even to appear as if retiring to his rest in ruddy clouds, the tabernacle pitched for his reception. *Note*; Atheists are without excuse. If even there were no bibles, the eternal Power and Godhead are sufficiently visible in the works of creation and providence.

2. Spiritual things appear concealed under these visible emblems. The bright heavens represent the true and devoted preachers and apostles of the glorious gospel, raised up by divine power, and qualified for their blessed work. Faithful to the task assigned, their word is gone out into all lands, and their preaching has reached the ends of the earth. The glorious sun in this firmament is Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness, arisen a light to lighten the Gentiles, whose warm, invigorating, and cheering beams believers happily experience; and he will continue to enlighten and enliven the faithful, till they shall be brought to that heaven of heavens, where their sun shall never go down, but with meridian beams of glory shine upon them for ever and ever.

2dly, However legible the glory of God might be in the works of creation to man in innocence, fallen man must have other means to teach him, or he will be brutish in his knowledge, and his understanding darkened. The book of God is now become more essential than the volume of nature.

This blessed word is here described under various properties: [1.] *It is perfect, converting the soul*: it contains a perfect discovery of the will of God; of that salvation wrought out by the Redeemer: it is the instrument that the Spirit makes use of to convert the sinner's heart, and makes those holy and happy who truly by faith trust upon it. [2.] *It is sure, making wise the simple*: being the word of the faithful God, it cannot deceive us; and they who, however simple in the eyes of men, are enabled firmly to trust upon it, are truly wise, wise unto salvation. [3.] *The statutes of the Lord are right*; in themselves direct us in the right way to life and glory, and therefore *rejoice the heart*, which being found in Christ the way, and walking in holiness, rejoices in hope of the glory of God. [4.] *The commandment of the Lord is pure*, from all mixture and adulteration, and tending to produce purity of heart and life; *enlightening the eyes*, which, without this divine teaching, are closed in darkness. [5.] *The fear of the Lord*, the doctrine contained in that word which teaches this holy fear of God, *is clean, and endureth for ever*; cleanses and keeps us clean; so that those who have fully experienced the washing of water in the word, are without spot, and undefiled. [6.] *The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether*: his decisions in his word are not only true, and what will infallibly come to pass; but also most equitable, and no exception can be made to any of them. [7.] *More*

P S A L. XX.

The church bleſſeth the king in his exploits: her confidence in God's ſuccour.

To the chief muſician, A Pfalm of David.

THE LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.

2 Send thee help from the ſanctuary, and ſtrengthen thee out of Zion.

3 Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt ſacrifice. Selah.

4 Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counſel.

5 We will rejoice in thy ſalvation, and in the name of our God we will ſet up *our* banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.

6 Now know I that the LORD faveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the ſaving ſtrength of his right hand.

7 Some *truſt* in chariots, and ſome in horſes: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

8 They are brought down and fallen: but we are riſen, and ſtand upright.

9 Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call.

[7.] *More to be deſired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold:* all the gold which the mines of Peru produce, is not to be compared with one great and precious promiſe of God's word: the one can only make us appear great before men; by the other, we become partakers of a divine nature.

[8.] *Sweeter alſo than honey, and the honeycomb.* None of the delights of ſenſe can at all compare with the conſolations which ariſe from God's word: the one too frequently debaſes men into brutes, the other exalts them to partake of angelic joys. [9.] *Moreover, by them is thy ſervant warned* againſt the ſnares and temptations of ſin and Satan, and directed in the diſcharge of every duty and relation towards God or man. [10.] *And in keeping of them there is great reward;* not of the law, as a covenant of life, for none then would obtain the reward; but of the goſpel, by holding faſt its doctrines, being influenced by its principles, and reaching after the accompliſhment of its promiſes: in this way the reward of eternal life may be expected.

P S A L. XX.

Title. לִמְנוּצָה מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד *lamnatſeab mizmor ledavid.* This Palm is ſuppoſed to have been written for the ſervice of the tabernacle, and to be ſung in parts by the congregation and David himſelf, (See the note on ver. 9.) in order to pray for his good ſucces in ſome great expedition; which it is probable, from ver. 7., was againſt the Ammonites and Syrians, who came with great numbers of horſemen and chariots to fight with him. See 2 Sam. x. 6. 8. 1 Chron. xix. 7. Mudge obſerves, that the three firſt verſes ſeem to have been ſpoken by the people, or prieſts of the temple rather, upon the king's coming to offer ſacrifice, before he ſet out upon his expedition. The five next, not by David, but by the high-prieſt, upon ſeeing the ſacrifice promiſe well, by being happily conſumed to aſhes, joined perhaps with the other uſual ſignals of favour; which makes him break out aſreſh in the 6th verſe; *Now know I, &c.* The laſt verſe was ſung by the people or prieſts as a chorus.

Ver. 1. Defend thee] Raiſe thee up. Houb.

Ver. 3. Accept thy burnt-ſacrifice] Burn to aſhes, &c. Houbigant according to the original. See Levit. ix. 24. Judg. vi. 21. 2 Chron. vii. 1. 1 Kings, xviii. 38.

Ver. 5. We will ſet up our banners] We ſhall ſet up our

banners; "We ſhall have a triumphant proceſſion upon thy victory with ſhouts and banners diſplayed." The LXX, Vulgate, and Syriac, render it, *We ſhall be magnified.*

Ver. 6. He will hear him from his holy heaven, &c.] He will answer him from his holy heavens, with the victorious proweſs of his right arm. Mudge. Houbigant renders it, *He will hear him from his holy heaven: the ſalvation of his right hand will be moſt powerful.*

Ver. 7. Some truſt in chariots, &c.] Theſe their chariots, and thoſe their horſes; but we will celebrate the name of the Lord our God. Houbigant and Mudge.

Ver. 9. Save, Lord, &c.] Lord, ſave the king: He will bear us, when we call: Or, And bear us, when we call. Houbigant and Mudge.

REFLECTIONS.—We have here,

1. The matter of the people's requeſts: That in the day of trouble the Lord would defend their king, whether from ſecret conſpiracies or open violence; and that *Jacob's* God, whoſe providential care of *him* was ſo eminent, would ſhew the ſame tender regard to their ſovereign, ſtrengthening him with ſpiritual might, and from his ſanctuary ſend him forth conquering and to conquer: that all his ſacrifices might be accepted, and his prayers graciously answered; every deſire crowned with ſucceſs, and every petition granted. *Note;* (1.) The higheſt dignity cannot guard off troubles, and crowns eſpecially are often lined with thorns. (2.) None need our prayers more than thoſe whoſe height of ſtation expoſes them to ſo many temptations. (3.) When we begin with a ſacrifice of prayer, we may hope to end with ſongs of praiſe.

The King Meſſiah ſaw many days of trouble, from the cradle to the grave, and, when he cried, was heard and holpen. His God ſupported him; angelic hoſts attended to ſtrengthen him; his offering was a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmell, well-pleaſing to God; and all his heart's deſire, reſpecting the ſalvation of the faithful, was thereupon granted.

2. They promiſe hereupon to rejoice before God: *We will rejoice,* when theſe petitions are granted; then the praiſe

P S A L. XXI.

A thanksgiving for victory. Confidence of further success.

To the chief musician, A Psalm of David.

THE king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!

2 Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.

3 For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.

4 He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.

5 His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.

6 For thou hast made him most blessed for

ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.

7 For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.

8 Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.

10 Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.

11 For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.

praise of all shall be ascribed to the glorious author of the salvation; and in his name we will triumphantly set up our banners.

The triumphs of Jesus are matters of greatest joy to the faithful; in his salvation they rejoice, see all their foes laid at their feet, and set up their triumphant banners: *O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? Thanks be God that giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord; and at his feet the faithful believer's crown will be for ever laid, and shouting for joy he will ever cry, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive blessing and glory.*

P S A L. XXI.

Title.] למנצח מן מור לרוד lamnatseach mizmor ledavid.

Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that this psalm was composed by David in a transport of joy and thanksgiving after his conquest of Rabbah, and triumph over the Ammonites. It is of the same kind with the preceding. The two first verses seem to be spoken upon seeing the sacrifice promise well; the five next express the continued series of divine favour to the king, and from thence the priest promises him success against his enemies. The last is an address to God. The psalm is generally thought, even by the Jews themselves, to have a relation to Christ; and indeed there are some things in it which are more literally fulfilled in Christ than in David. See verses 4, 5, 6. We shall, therefore, in the following notes, consider it particularly as relating to Christ.

Ver. 1. The king.] Though, by the king, we may here understand king David, who composed this psalm, yet it may be much better explained of the king Messiah. *In thy strength,* means in the divine power, which was manifested in the resurrection of Christ, and in the establishment of his gospel.

Ver. 3. For thou preventest him.] The word in the original signifies to encompass. The rendering of Castalio is fully expressive of the sense; *Thou hast bestowed most eminent favours on him.* By the crown of pure gold, may be

meant, in general, an illustrious crown; which is here represented as being set upon our blessed Saviour's head at his exaltation into heaven, in token of his being then advanced to the chief exercise of his regal authority. Thus he is said, Pf. viii. 5. to be *crowned with glory and honour*; and St. John says, with respect to his deified humanity, in which he was made King of Kings and Lord of Lords, that *on his head were many crowns.* Rev. xix. 12. 16.

Ver. 4. He asked life.] New life from the dead; his resurrection; the same that is meant by *his heart's desire*, ver. 2. Isaiah says, *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall prolong his days.* Length of days for ever and ever, is an expression which, however some understand of David and his successors on the throne, can with no degree of propriety belong to him or to them, but as referring to that king for ever, who was of the lineage of David, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end. See Luke i. 32, 33.

Ver. 6. Thou hast made him most blessed for ever.] According to the original, *Thou hast set him to be blessings for ever*; i. e. to be the author of all felicity and blessedness to his subjects and servants. See Gal. iii. 8. In conformity to the next clause, *Thou hast made him glad, &c.* Jesus Christ says of himself, *My heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; in thy presence is the fulness of joy, &c.* Pf. xvi. 9. 11. And thus the Psalmist says of him: *Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* Pf. xlv. 7.

Ver. 8. Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies.] Thus Pf. ii. 9. *Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron, &c.* The menaces that are described in this and the following verses particularly relate to the unbelieving Jews. Compare Mal. iv. 1. Pf. ii. 2—4. cix. 13—15.

Ver. 11. A mischievous device, which, &c.] A mischievous device, but prevailed not. Houbigant. Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that these words refer more especially in their primary sense to the Ammonites, and those cruelties which they intended to inflict upon David and his people, but which were retaliated upon their own heads. See Life of David, vol. ii. p. 118.

Ver.

12 Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, *when* thou shalt make ready *thine* arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.

13 Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: *so* will we sing and praise thy power.

Ver. 12. Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, &c.] For thou shalt make them as Shechem; i. e. "Thou shalt subdue them, and portion them out, as the two "brothers did Shechem heretofore." The expression became a proverb, as in Pf. lx. and cviii. The word arrows is not in the original, and may elegantly be omitted, as in Pf. vii. 12. He hath bent his bow, and fixed it; that is, fixed his arrow upon it.

REFLECTIONS.—Ist, David could not experience such wonderful deliverances without deep gratitude; and his people, who prayed for him, were confident that God's salvation was the very joy of his heart; and therefore in his behalf they offer to God their sacrifice of praise for prayers granted; for blessings which prevented even desire; for dignity so eminent, to which he was advanced; for length of days in the midst of danger; and an abiding throne, though so often shaken; for great glory, honour, and majesty, bestowed from on high; for the promise of future blessings, and the experience of present exceeding great consolations.

But more peculiarly applicable are these words to the King of Glory, who, in his work of man's redemption, was supported by the divine strength to go through the arduous task, and in the prospect of the salvation of the faithful, rejoiced with exceeding great joy in the midst of all his sufferings. To him every request was granted, whether for grace or glory, in behalf of the faithful. In him God's preventing blessings were wonderfully manifested to the sons of men, without desert, yea, without desire. A crown of glory is the reward of his sufferings, and worthy is he to be thus exalted; death, Satan, and sin, being all subdued by him; and angels, principalities, and powers, put under him. The life which for a moment he laid down is restored for ever; Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, and, because he lives, we shall live also. Unutterable is the glory and majesty that he has received, the government of all things in heaven and earth being committed to him. *Thou hast made him most blessed for ever, or, as the Margin of our English Bibles read it, thou hast set him to be blessings for ever,* to communicate eternal blessings to his faithful people, and be himself the author, procurer, and bestower of them; and, in consequence of all these things, the spirit of gladness rests upon him; and in the high approbation of God his Father, in his mediatorial work, is his everlasting delight. *Note:* Every faithful believer in Jesus is a king, and shall share his triumphs; be supported by the same strength; find the same gracious answers to his prayers; experience God's preventing blessings; receive at last the crown of glory; and reign with his exalted head, happy, eternally and unutterably happy in the light of God's countenance.

P S A L. XXII.

David complaineth in great discouragement: he prayeth in great distress: he praiseth God.

To the chief musician upon Aijeleth Shahar,
A Psalm of David.

MY God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from*

2dly, Praise for past mercies encourages confidence of present and future blessings; the priest and the people therefore express their trust, that no enemies should ever shake the stability of David's throne; but that vengeance from God should pursue and overtake them to the uttermost; and, when this divine interposition shall appear, they promise to renew their grateful songs of praise. But we must look farther than David's throne, and the subduing of his enemies, to the more enduring dominion of David's Son and Lord.

1. His enemies must finally and eternally fall before him: wicked men, and wicked devils, who have hated his government, shall not escape his arm. Their mischievous devices shall not only be disappointed, whether against himself or his people, but their malice be visited in judgments terrible as just: wrath to the uttermost shall overtake them, and the furnace of hell be heated for their reception; while sharp arrows within shall pierce the conscience, and waken up the worm which never dies. Sinner, mark the end of the enemies of Christ and his kingdom; consider thy ways, and be wise.

2. The whole is ascribed to the Lord's power; it is he who must and will exalt his own glory in the salvation of the faithful, and in the destruction of his enemies; and all our work and business will be, everlastingly to sing and praise him for his complete redemption.

P S A L. XXII.

*Title. אֵילֵת שָׁחַר Aielet habshachar] Dr. Delaney supposes this and the 25th Psalm to have been written by David when he was at Mahanaim, the place where God appeared to Israel in his distress, Gen. xxxii. The 3d, 4th, and 5th verses receive no small illustration and beauty, if supposed to be occasioned by the recollection of the former manifestation of divine Providence on this very spot; the ideas which arose successively in the Psalmist's mind being the following: God had made good his promises to Israel;—promises given in this very place:—at a time when Israel was in grievous distress; and the worship of Israel still continued to be holy:—Why, then, should not David hope that he would make good his promises likewise to him; even though to all appearance he was on the brink of destruction? The Jews themselves, in *Midrash*, apply this Psalm, as descriptive of the sufferings of the Messiah; and our Lord, in making use of the first words of it upon the cross, (when, as some think, he repeated the whole,) not only laid claim to the character of the Messiah, but likewise tacitly insinuated, that his sufferings, instead of shocking their faith, should convince them, that he only could be the Messiah predicted by the prophet, because the indignities*

helping me, and from the words of my roaring? thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and
 2 O my God, I cry in the day-time, but am not silent.

nities that he had foretold, notwithstanding they were so extraordinary, and told with so much minuteness, were all accomplished in him. Certainly some passages in this psalm were more literally fulfilled in our Saviour than they were in David. We shall therefore consider it more particularly as referring to Christ. It is intitled אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר *Aïleth bashchar*; which is commonly rendered, *The hind of the morning*. "Many nice observations have been made on the titles of the psalms, but attended with the greatest uncertainty. Later eastern customs, respecting the titles of books and poems, may perhaps render these matters a little more determinate; but great precision and positiveness must not be expected. D'Herbelot, in his *Bibliothèque Orientale*, informs us, that a Persian metaphysical and mystical poem, was called *the rose bush*: a collection of moral essays, *the garden of anemones*: another eastern book, *the lion of the forest*: That Scherfeddin ab Bauffiri called a poem of his, written in praise of his Arabian prophet, (who, he affirmed, had cured him in his sleep of a paralytic disorder,) *the habit of a dervise*: and because he is there celebrated for having given fight to a blind person, the poem is also intitled by the author, *the bright star*. Other titles mentioned by him are as odd. The ancient Jewish taste may reasonably be supposed to have been of the same kind. Agreeable to which is the explanation which some learned men have given of David's commanding *the Bow* to be taught the children of Israel, 2 Sam. i. 18. which they apprehend did not relate to *the use of that weapon in war*, but to the hymn which he composed on occasion of the death of Saul and Jonathan; in which he mentioned *the bow of Jonathan*, and from whence he intitled that elegy, as they think, *the bow*. The present psalm might in like manner be called *the hind of the morning*; the 56th, *the dove dumb in distant places*; the 66th, *the lily of the testimony*; the 80th, *the lilies of the testimony*, in the plural; and the 45th simply *the lilies*. It is sufficiently evident, I should think, that these terms do not denote certain musical instruments: for if they did, why do the more common names of the *timbrel*, the *harp*, the *psaltery*, and the *trumpet*, with which psalms were sung, (Ps. lxxxi. 2, 3.) never appear in those titles?—Do they signify certain tunes? It ought not, however, to be imagined that these tunes are so called from their bearing some resemblance to the noises made by the things mentioned in the titles; for *lilies* are silent, if this supposition should otherwise have been allowed with respect to the *hind of the morning*. Nor doth the 56th psalm speak of the *mourning* of the *dove*, but of its *dumbness*. If they signify tunes at all, they must signify, I should imagine, the tunes to which such songs or hymns were sung, as were distinguished by these names; and so the inquiry will terminate in this point: whether the psalms to which these titles were affixed were called by these names; or whether they were some other psalms or songs, to the tune of which these were to be sung. And as we do not find the *bow* referred to, nor the same name twice made use of, so far as our lights reach, it should seem most probable that

"these are the names of those very psalms to which they are prefixed. The 42d psalm, it may be thought, might very well have been entitled *the hind of the morning*; because, as the hart panted after the water-brooks, so panted the soul of the Psalmist after God. But the present psalm, it is certain, might equally well be distinguished by this title; dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have encircled me; words which allude to the eastern manner of hunting, namely, by assembling great numbers of people and inclosing the creatures that they hunt; and as the Psalmist did, in the 42d psalm, rather choose to compare himself to a *hart* than a *hind*, the present much better answers this title, in which he speaks of his hunted soul in the feminine gender: ver. 20. *Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling* (which in the original is feminine) *from the power of the dog*. No one who reflects on the circumstances of David at the time to which the 56th psalm refers, and considers the oriental taste, will wonder to see that psalm intitled *the dove dumb in distant places*; nor are lilies more improper to be made the title of other psalms, with suitable distinctions, than a *garden of anemones* to be the name of a collection of moral discourses." See Observations, p. 318. Fenwick thinks that the title of this psalm should be rendered, *the strength of the morning*; and that it relates to Christ, as being the *bright morning-star*, or, *day-spring from on high*, as he is called, Luke i. 78. *Him, the dew of whose birth is of the womb of the morning*: The title therefore, says he, leads us to observe and contemplate in this psalm, the depth of that love and condescension which made the Son of God humble himself in the way here described, and even to the death of the cross, though he be the bright morning-star, and the day-spring from on high.

Ver. 1. *My God, my God, &c.*] It is observable, that *Sabachthani*, produced by the Evangelists, is not a Hebrew word; and hence it is most likely that our Saviour used that dialect which was most commonly understood by the Jews in his time; and which, it is probable, was a mixed dialect, composed of Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac. Agreeably to this supposition, it is further observed, that *eloi, eloi*, as St. Mark expresses our Saviour's words, were more nearly Chaldee. The Hebrew, as it now stands, according to our manner of reading, is אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי רִכְּהָ עֲזַבְתָּנִי *ali, ali, lamah ezabtani*. Our Saviour was not ignorant of the reason why he was afflicted; *Why hast thou forsaken me?* He knew that all the rigours and pains which he endured upon the cross were only because *the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and God laid on him the iniquity of us all*; Isai. liiii. 5, 6. The words imply then that he himself had done nothing to merit the evils which he suffered. This is the meaning of the question here, as also of that in Ps. ii. 1. The latter part of the verse refers to Christ's prayer in the garden. See Luke, xxii. 44.

Ver. 2. *Thou hearest not*] St. Paul says, Heb. v. 7. *That Christ was heard in that he feared*; but Christ here says, that his father heard him not, only to intimate that he did not dispense him from suffering the death of the cross; for which the father, *who heard him always*, (John, xi. 42.) had wife

3 But thou *art* holy, O *thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

6 But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*,

8 He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

9 But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother's breasts.

10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou *art* my God from my mother's belly.

11 Be not far from me: for trouble *is* near: for *there is* none to help.

12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round.

13 They gaped upon me *with* their mouths, *as* a ravening and a roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me.

18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

wife reasons, taken from the end for which his son was incarnate. See John, xii. 27. The last words may be rendered, *And have no rest.*

Ver. 3. But thou art holy, &c.] But notwithstanding thou dost not hear me at present, I am persuaded that thou wilt do so; for thou art holy, &c. good and gracious; the divinity that dwellest where the praises and homages of Israel have been always offered for mercies granted unto them.

Ver. 4, 5. Our fathers, &c.] i. e. My fathers, according to the flesh: the Israelites, to whom, whenever they cried unto thee in their distress, thou sentest a deliverer; such as Gideon, Samson, Samuel, &c.

Ver. 6. But I am a worm, &c.] As if he had said, "Thou hearest others; but, as for me, thou sufferest me to pray, to groan, and to weep, but thou wilt not seem to hear me." Christ may be said to have been a worm, with respect to the mean and poor condition in which he lived; but especially to the kind of death which he suffered; for he was stripped of his clothes, and fixed upon the cross, naked as a worm of the earth: See Phil. ii. 7. Matt. xxvii. 39—43. Indeed, the best way to understand the sense of this psalm is to read the history of our Saviour's passion.

Ver. 9, 10. But thou art he, &c.] It was by the particular order of his Father that Christ came into the world; and therefore he said at his entrance into it, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me:* Heb. x. 5. *When I was upon my mother's breasts,* evidently relates to the miraculous order which God gave to Joseph and Mary to carry into Egypt the young child Jesus, who as yet *hung upon his mother's breasts,* Matt. ii. 20, 21. *I was cast upon thee from the womb,* means that God took him at his birth, and in a particular manner charged himself with the care of him. It was anciently the custom, when a child was born, to lay it upon the ground; and then he who lifted it from thence thereby declared himself to be its father, and took upon himself the care of its

maintenance. See Gen. xxx. 3. l. 23. Therefore when the poets would exaggerate the happiness of a man to whom all things succeeded according to his desire, they said, that he was taken up by some god or goddess.

Ver. 11. For there is none to help] See Isai. liii. 3. Ixiii. 3. John, xvi. 32.

Ver. 12. Many bulls—of Bashan] By the strong and fierce *bulls of Bashan,* which was the richest soil in Palestine, are represented the haughty senators, the chief-priests, the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the other great men of Judea; who, after having resolved upon the death of Christ, Ps. ii. 2. were so insolent as to make their appearance round his cross, and to insult him with their mockeries.

Ver. 14. I am poured out like water, &c.]

*As water spilt, and poured out, I seem
As all my bones were out of joint.*

FENWICK.

By this comparison, and by that of *wax,* which melts before the fire, the speaker represents how much his strength was exhausted, and his spirits as it were dissolved. Nothing can be more pathetic and affecting than the description in this and the following verse; where the melancholy expression *my tongue cleaveth to my jaws,* was verified by our Saviour in the last agonies of his passion, when he cried out *I thirst.* John, xix. 28. *The dust of death* signifies the brink of the grave.

Ver. 16. For dogs have compassed me] The idea here is, of a pack of hounds encompassing a distressed *deer,* which they have hunted down. See the remarks on the title. Hereby are represented the Roman soldiers and the other Gentiles who were with the Jews around the cross. Schultens renders the next clause, *the assembly of the wicked, as a lion, have broken my hands and my feet.* But Houbigant defends our present version. See his note. This and the following verses were literally fulfilled in our Saviour; and Theodoret observes, that when he was extended, and his limbs distorted on the cross, it might be easy for a spectator literally

H

rally

19 But be not thou far from me, O LORD, O my strength, haste thee to help me.

20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog.

21 Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

23 Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

25 My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them

that fear him.

26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

28 For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations

29 All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.

30 A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation.

31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

rally to tell all his bones. See Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 88.

Ver. 20, 21. Deliver my soul, &c.] Bishop Hare observes, that in these two verses the Psalmist recapitulates the four things that he had before mentioned, and to which he had compared his enemies; the sword, the lion, the dogs, the unicorns, [the oryx or buffalo] substituted instead of bulls; and he intreats the Lord to deliver him from them all. Instead of, *my darling from the power of the dog*, the Arabic reads, *and from the hand or power of the dog, which has seized me*. Houbigant and Mudge, for *darling* read *my solitary*, or *only one*; meaning his soul, or life; which was now left destitute, and exposed to all the outrages of his enemies. See Ps. lxxv. 16. xxxv. 17.

Ver. 22. I will declare thy name] Nothing is more common in the psalms, than these sudden transitions, and nothing more beautiful. Our Saviour here passes from the mournful view of his death to the comfortable prospect of his resurrection. He intimates, that after God should have delivered him from the power of death by a glorious resurrection, he would more fully publish his gospel, by which the adorable perfections of God, and especially his wisdom and mercy, would be more eminently displayed among his apostles, and among the rest of his disciples and followers, whom He is not ashamed to call his brethren, Heb. ii. 11. The following verses can certainly be applied to David only in a very restrained sense, but are literally true of Christ, and his triumphant reign; when in the latter days all the people upon earth, even in the most remote corners of the world, shall worship and adore him. The congregation here, and the great congregation, ver. 25. must refer to the whole body of the Christian church.

Ver. 26. The meek shall eat, &c.] The humble: See Matt. xi. 29. "They shall eat of the true christian sacrifice; in consequence of which, they shall praise the Lord, and live for ever; i. e. shall be always full of comfort

and joy, which nothing shall be able to take from them." The next verse so clearly represents the calling of the Gentiles, that we cannot reasonably interpret it in any other sense. See Ps. ii. 8.

Ver. 29. All they that be fat upon earth, &c.] The fat upon earth, means the rich, the great, and princes themselves. Houbigant renders it, *the rich of the earth*. They shall eat and worship; devoutly partake of the eucharistical sacrifice of Christ, as the Jews did of the legal sacrifices. See 1 Cor. x. 17, 18. The latter part of the verse is understood differently. *All that descend into the dust*, some suppose to mean all the poor, who, as well as the rich, shall worship him. *For none can keep alive his own soul:* i. e. The greatest, as well as the meanest, must acknowledge that their salvation proceeds from him alone. Houbigant renders this and the following verses thus: *All the rich of the earth shall come and worship; all those who go down into the dust shall prostrate themselves before him;* ver. 30. *But my soul shall live to him: my seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation:* ver. 31. *They shall come and declare his righteousness unto a people who shall be born, when he hath done this:* i. e. when he hath fulfilled that which is here predicted.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have here,

1. A bitter complaint under a sense of God's absence from his soul. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,* and art so far from helping me, when under the bitterest agonies of soul, as well as tormenting pains in my body, and from the words of my roaring, when with an exceeding loud and bitter cry I bemoan my sufferings? In the day on the cross, and in the night in the garden, incessantly he cried; and yet the bitter cup might not pass from him; and herein God appeared as if he heard him not.

2. He encourages his trust in God, notwithstanding his most painful situation, [1.] From a sense of the holiness

P S A L. XXIII.

David's confidence in God's grace.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of

ness of God; *Thou art holy*, who, in all the sufferings that the Redeemer endured, designed to display his righteousness in the punishment of sin; *O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel*, art the object of continual praise for the wondrous mercies manifested in redeeming grace. [2.] From the former experience of the saints of God: *Our fathers trusted in thee*, &c. As God, it may be said, Who is his father? As man he was the seed of Abraham, David, &c. whose troubles were as great as their deliverances were glorious, and who never sought God's face in vain.

3. He laments the contempt and reproach cast upon him: as a worm trodden down by every foot; so despicable, as if he was no man; below the meanest; derided and scorned; treated as an impostor; executed as a villain and murderer; and, even on the accursed tree, mockery added to his shame and torture; while they who went by literally fulfilled his prophecy, wagging the head and saying, *He trusted on the Lord, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.* Note; (1.) The most honourable character in the sight of God is usually that which man despiseth. (2.) They who will be followers of Christ must be content to bear his reproach.

4. Notwithstanding, he trusted in God, whose care from tenderest infancy he had experienced; by wondrous providences, though in a stable born, *thou didst make me hope, or keep me in safety*; and, by a miraculous vision, secured him, when a babe at the breast in Egypt, from Herod's cruelty. *I was cast upon thee* from the days of my nativity, and I trust that I shall find the same protection to the end of my life. Note; The mercies of our days of helpless infancy should never be forgotten; and he who brought us safely from the womb, we are bound to trust, will carry us comfortably to our grave.

2dly, Whither shall the afflicted sufferer fly, but unto the God of his help and his salvation? We have now the sufferings of Christ described; and with such precision, that we cannot but be convinced that Jesus is the Christ. Troubles like rolling waves, from perfidious friends and open enemies, approached him; *none to help him*; forsaken of all, and left alone to grapple with the united force of earth and hell. Fierce and strong as bulls of Bashan, his enemies rushed upon him; eager as the blood-hound on his prey, they seized him; and, cruel as a ravening and roaring lion, sought to terrify his mind, while they broke him in pieces with their savage jaws. He seems as weak as water; his joints as if unloosed; his heart melted as wax, and his strength quite failing him. He is compassed about by the assembly of the wicked, urgent to hasten his miserable end; nailed to the accursed tree, hung up in ignominy and torture; his bones ready to start through his skin; his enemies feasting their eyes with the inhuman spectacle; his tongue dry with thirst, which is insulted with vinegar mingled with gall; his blood gushing out as water upon

the earth; his soul melted as wax with a sense of the divine wrath, and death coming to put at last a period to his miseries. Such things he endured for us men, and for our salvation. Had he not borne these torturing pains, we must have been eternally tormented: if his soul had not felt the wrath of God, ours must have been exposed to it: but for his thirst we must have wanted a drop of water to cool a flaming tongue; or at least, if his body had not for a while been laid in the dust, our bodies and souls must have for ever lain in the belly of hell. O, blessed then, for ever blessed, be God for Jesus Christ!

3dly, When Jesus, by the sufferings of death, for a moment seemed to sink beneath his foes, in silent anguish his people sat disconsolate; but lo! he comes to awaken up their praises, and from the dust to proclaim his great redemption.

1. He opens the triumphant song himself: *I will declare thy name*, thy glory, grace, and faithfulness, unto my brethren, the church of the faithful redeemed, whom Christ is not ashamed to call brethren: *in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee*; in the hearts of his militant members on earth, or at the head of his glorified saints in heaven.

2. He calls upon his people to join the thanksgiving. The spiritual seed of Jacob, and the true Israel of God, must praise and glorify him for his mercy in the Redeemer, whose afflictions, far from despising or abhorring, he was well-pleased with, and accepted as the full satisfaction for our sins; looked upon him with most delightful complacency, even in his agony, and heard and answered his cry in the salvation vouchsafed to him in the resurrection-day, and to all his faithful people for his sake: and herein the Saviour leads the way, *My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows of praise to God*, or his engagements to his faithful people, whose character is given as those who fear God.

3. In Christ are found rich supplies for the soul's nourishment and comfort. *The meek*, those who are lowly in their own eyes, and have learned of the meek and humble Jesus, shall eat, feed upon the flesh of Christ, and all the saving benefits thence derived, and be satisfied, in the perfection of his sacrifice and redemption, and the consequent enjoyment of God to all eternity.

4. The extent of Christ's kingdom shall be universal. By the power of Divine grace, the ends of the earth shall be called and converted to him, and come and worship before him. The kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and he shall be the governor, to reign in his people's hearts by love, and over his enemies with a rod of iron.

P S A L. XXIII.

Title.] מזמור לדוד mizmor ledavid. In this psalm David expresses his confidence in God, who had delivered him

H 2

from

the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my

head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

from the persecutions of Saul, and settled him in a prosperous condition: whom, therefore, he here compares first to a good shepherd, who carefully feeds and diligently watches over his flock; and, secondly, to a hospitable friend, by whom he was sure of being liberally and splendidly entertained. See the note on ver. 2. It has been observed, that, though the Psalms in general appear with inimitable beauty, even in the dress in which we have them; yet it should always be considered how much they must be supposed to fall short of their original excellence, to those who view them only in a translation, nay, in almost a literal translation, and that from a language which abounds in bold figures and ellipses; all of which must be supplied in the translation, or else to common readers it would be utterly unintelligible. Hence the Psalms lie under greater disadvantages than any writings either in the Greek or Latin languages. Yet if any of the finest and most admired pieces of heathen poetry were to be clothed like these in a plain literal dress, and then compared with them, the comparison would abundantly shew what Mr. Addison observes of the Jews, "that their nation produced men of great genius, without considering them as inspired writers; who have transmitted to us many hymns and divine odes, which excel those that are delivered down to us by the ancient Greeks and Romans in the poetry, as much as in the subject to which they are consecrated." But, allowing David's natural genius to have been highly excellent, and that likewise of the other authors of these divine poems, yet, as these compositions are so much preferable to all human composition, this may fairly be urged as a corroborating proof of the divine inspiration of the authors of them. See Bishop Lowth's 6th Prelection.

Ver. 2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, &c.*] Rabbi Solomon tells us, (most likely upon the credit of ancient tradition,) that, when David went into the forest of Hareth, it became fruitful and irriguous, though it had been before dry, barren, and impassable; and that David alludes hereto in this psalm, where he considers God as his shepherd, who would, in his own time, lead him into fruitful pastures; and till then he was safe under his protection in the most dangerous scenes, ver. 4. When he calls God his shepherd, he plainly implies, that he followed wherever it pleased God to guide; alluding to the practice of the Asiatic shepherds, who do not drive, but lead their flocks, which are trained to follow them, as David evidently did the guidance of God at this time. "This, I think, (says Dr. Delaney,) is the most rational comment transmitted to us by the rabbins; and surely it is not impossible, but that Hareth, which was before a barren desert, might now, by a singular blessing of God upon the industry of David and his companions, become a green pasture." Life of David, b. i. c. 7.

Ver. 3. *He restoreth my soul, &c.*] *He refresheth, &c.* Mudge. "When I am ready to faint, he refreshes me,

"and brings me to life again." See Pl. xix. 8. *In the paths of righteousness, Green renders very properly, after Schultens, in right paths;* "in such paths as are right and safe for me." See Prov. viii. 8. 20. And he justly observes, that it is right to keep up the metaphorical sense, and to carry on the image of a shepherd, under which God is represented, and not break in upon it, as in the case in our version of the 3d verse, and then return to it again in the 4th.

Ver. 4. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death*] *Yea, though I should stray into the valley of the shadow of death;* a valley overspread with the horrors of darkness and of death, being thickly shaded with trees, and infested by wild beasts. Dr. Delaney thinks this a noble reference to the dismal forests of Hareth. "Surely," says he, "the valley of such a forest, with all its gloomy horrors, inhabited only by bears, and lions, and tygers, whose dens are in the deepest shades, is, with infinite beauty, stiled the valley of the shadow of death. Thy rod, signifies "thy protection, which will keep me, as a shepherd does his sheep with a crook, from straying from thee." Thy staff, signifies "thy defence, which will guard me from all mine enemies, as a shepherd with his staff defends the sheep from the wolves."

Ver. 5. *Thou preparest a table, &c.*] This alludes to the plentiful support which he found in the wilderness, notwithstanding the efforts of his enemies to distress him. *Thou anointest my head with oil,* means, "thou treatest me like a well-accepted guest at this table which thou hast prepared for me;" alluding to a custom of the eastern nations who anointed the heads of their guests with fragrant oils. See Amos, vi. 6. Luke, vii. 46. The next expression, *my cup runneth over,* alludes in the same manner to the abundance of good things which God had so graciously given him.

Ver. 6. *And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever*] i. e. "In return to thee for these thy favours and blessings, I will be as constantly in the tabernacle at the hours of divine service, as if it were my ordinary abode." Thus it is said of Anna the prophetess, that *she departed not from the temple,* Luke, ii. 37. Instead of *for ever,* many render it after the Hebrew *לְאָרְךָ יָמִים* *leorech yamim to length of days.*

REFLECTIONS.—The design of God's word is, to encourage the faith, enliven the hope, and quicken the obedience of his people. In the psalm before us, he appears in a character most amiable and engaging, as feeding the flock of his pasture, whom he bought with his blood. *The Lord is my shepherd,* may every believer say; mine, because I am his, dearly purchased and tenderly beloved: *I shall not want;* how can I, when out of his fulness I receive, who is able to do exceeding abundantly for me, above all I can ask or think; and whose love inclines him to supply me according to the exceeding greatness of his power?

My

P S A L. XXIV.

God's lordship in the world. The citizens of his spiritual kingdom. An exhortation to receive him.

A Psalm of David.

THE earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

My body he will feed with food convenient for me, and my soul he will supply according to the riches of his grace. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures*, where faith feeds upon the great and precious promises of Jesus, ever affording the sweetest repast; and, in his blessed ordinances, finds meat to eat that the world knoweth not of. *There he maketh me to lie down*,—me whom, when a wanderer on the world's barren mountains, he kindly led to these verdant fields, where now I find a quiet resting-place, lie down with pleasing composure, because of my shepherd's care, and fear no guilt to embitter my portion, no enemy to disturb my repose. *He leadeth me beside the still waters*, the waters of Shiloah, that go softly, flowing from the rock of Christ, cooling the thirst which the remembrance of past sin or present temptation causes, and filling the soul with consolations unspeakable and glorious, like the source from whence they flow. *He restoreth my soul*, when fierce disease or deep decay threatens my ruin; or, when, foolishly wandering from the shepherd's care, my erring footsteps turn aside, his watchful eye is over me, his tender hand stretched out to save me, to heal the sickness of my soul, to restore the joys that I once was wont to find, and with fresh vigour to refresh my fainting heart. *He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness*, points out my way, holds up my goings, and enables me to walk upright before him, in that highway of holiness which leads to eternal glory; *for his name's sake*, as an act of unmerited grace and favour, displaying in me a sinner the riches of his glory. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death*, the deepest distresses of afflicting providences, or that unknown dark and dangerous road, at the prospect of which mortality shrinks back, and sense shudders, *I will fear no evil*; dark as the shadows are spread over it, deep as the valley lies, long and terrible as to nature's view the road appears, my faith from far discerns the beams of glorious light, my soul dares boldly step into the grave, assured there to find the golden gates of life and immortality. *For thou art with me*, thou who hast before passed the dreadful shade, shall guide me safely through. *Thy rod*, under which I have passed, and been sealed, *and thy staff of promises*; they comfort me, make me more than conqueror over all my fears. *O, death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory?* behold a worm of earth, a sinful worm of earth, braving thy stroke, and triumphing in my fall. *Thou preparest a table before me*; while here below I sojourn, I want no manner of thing that is good, either for my body or my soul; thy liberal hand opens and fills me with plenteousness, and this even in the presence of mine enemies, who in vain seek to distress or embitter the portion that thou dost bestow: *thou anointest my head with oil*, that oil of gladness and joy a stranger intermeddeth not with; a joy,

2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? and who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

the earnest of that bliss above; when, crowned with glory, I shall sit down at thy festal board in heaven; and *my cup runneth over* with mercies more than I can tell, flowing from the rivers of endless bliss at thy right hand for evermore. *Surely goodness and mercy*, such as I have already tasted, goodness so beyond all desert, and mercy so free and boundless, *shall follow me all the days of my life*; like those welcome streams which in the parched desert followed Israel's camp, so every morning shall new mercies surround me; to-morrow shall be as to-day; yea, much more abundant, deeper and sweeter shall be the stream, the farther on time's rapid wings I am borne, till, launching forth into the ocean of eternity, my blessedness shall be complete, and I shall be filled with all the fulness of God. *And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever*; dwell there, where, without a veil, irradiation from the eternal Three shall dart unutterable joys into my glorified spirit, transformed into the image of the God whom I behold; and near his throne, high and lifted up, where bright angelic hosts, his train, fill the vast temple with his glory, my happy lot shall be to dwell, to dwell for ever; his love my all-sufficient portion, and my happy labour everlasting praise. Be this, Lord, my wished-for rest for ever; here let me dwell, for I have a delight therein!

P S A L. XXIV.

Title.] *לְרֹד מִזְמוֹר* *ledavid mizmor*. David composed this psalm upon his bringing the ark of God to Mount Sion, where it continued till Solomon had built his temple. By this ascent of the ark of God to the place of his peculiar residence, Mount Sion, the ascension of our Lord into heaven was prefigured, and, by the interpretation of the Jews themselves, the seventh and following verses do prophetically relate to Christ. Dr. Hammond observes, that this psalm, from the composition of it, seems to have been contrived so as to be performed by two companies or choirs; the one answering to the other, pretty much like the usual way in our cathedrals. To strengthen his conjecture that this psalm was actually performed so, he observes, that, upon very solemn occasions, (and such was this,) it was usual for the Jews to separate themselves in that manner, and divide into two companies, or choirs, one standing on one side, and the other on the other. Thus, so long ago as Moses's time, six tribes went up to Mount Gerizim, and the other six tribes to Ebal, the opposite mountain; when, from one of these mountains the blessings were read, and from the other the curses of the law. Deut. xxvii. 12. And when Nehemiah set up the walls of Jerusalem, he says, Neh. xii. 31. *I appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one went to the right hand (ver. 38.), and the other company of them that gave thanks*

5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

went over against them; and (ver. 40.) so stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God. In like manner, probably, the two choirs might stand, one on one side of the tabernacle, and the other on the other side, at the solemn placing of the ark in Sion, and thus repeat this psalm. If we attend to the psalm itself, this conjecture becomes more probable; and it seems very well to account for the sudden repetition, ver. 7. and 9.

Ver. 1. *The earth is the Lord's*] The Psalmist begins with a representation of God's dominion over this world in general, and his providential presence in every part of it. After which follows a declaration of his special presence in his tabernacle. St. Paul applies these words to Christ, 1 Cor. x. 26. 28. as intimating, according to the prophetic sense, that all the earth was, under the gospel, to become the land of God; because God was then to be known, and Christ would plant his church throughout the whole earth; whereas, under the Mosaic dispensation, it was only Judea that was called his land. Dr. Delaney, supposing this ode to be written upon the removal of the ark, imagines that this first verse was sung by the king, with a solemn and sonorous recitative; that the chorus was then divided, each singing in turn, and both joining in the close, *For he hath founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the floods.* Let this part of the music, says he, be supposed to have lasted till the procession reached the foot of the hill of Sion, or near it; then let the king be presumed to have stepped forth, and begun again in a sweet and solemn tone, *Who shall ascend,* &c.

Ver. 2. Then the singers, first chorus, *Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart;* second chorus, *who hath not lift up,* &c. to the end of the 6th verse: let this part of the music be supposed to have lasted till they reached the gates of the city, and then the king to have begun again, in that most sublime and heavenly strain, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates,* &c. which all repeated in chorus. *Lifting up the head,* is an image adapted to a portcullis, the head of which, as it is lifted, rises conspicuous above the gates. Mr. Johnson observes well, that *everlasting doors* means only, as to the first use of the psalm, doors made of very durable

P S A L. XXV.

David's confidence in prayer: he prayeth for remission of sins, and for help in affliction.

A Psalm of David.

UNTO thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me:

materials; but when applied to our Saviour's entering heaven, the word is to be taken in its most proper sense. *The King of Glory* signifies him who resided in the *shechinah*, or glory, over the ark, the symbol of the divine presence. The persons appointed to keep the gates, or perhaps the matrons of Jerusalem, meeting David here, as they did Saul upon his return from the conquest of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xviii., may be supposed next to have sung, *Who is the King of Glory?* and the first and second chorus in turn, *It is the Lord, strong and mighty,* &c. And now let us suppose the instruments to take up the same airs, (the king, the princes, and the matrons moving to the measure) and continue with them to the gates of the court of the tabernacle; then let the king again begin, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates,* &c. and be followed and answered as before: all closing,—instruments sounding, chorus singing, people shouting,—*He is the King of Glory.* How others, says he, may think upon the point, I cannot say, nor pretend to prescribe; but for my own part, I have no notion of hearing, or of any man's having ever seen or heard, any thing so great, so solemn, so celestial, on this side the gates of heaven!—Life of David, b. ii. c. 10.

P S A L. XXV.

Title.] לְדָוִד *ledavid.* This is one of the *alphabetical* or *acrostic* psalms, so called because every verse (in the Hebrew) begins with a different letter of the alphabet in their order. But it is to be noted that three of the letters are wanting. The last verse but one begins with ט *tau*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet: whence we may conclude, either that the last verse was added by some other person, or that the two last verses must be read as one. This psalm was written by David in some great distress, after the assassination of Uriah, as it is commonly thought; because, in all his distresses before that event, the Psalmist speaks with great confidence in his innocence; but after it with great humility, contrition, and sometimes with dejection. See Hare and Pilkington.

Ver. 3. *Which transgress without cause*] *Who deal perfidiously in vain.*

Ver.

for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

8 Good and upright *is* the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it *is* great.

12 What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

14 The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

15 Mine eyes *are* ever towards the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I *am* desolate and afflicted.

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.

18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins.

19 Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

20 O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

Ver. 13. His soul shall dwell at ease] Shall abide in good. Or, His own self shall rest quiet in plenty, and his seed shall inherit the land. Mudge.

*Ver. 15. For he shall pluck my feet, &c.] As the Hebrew grammarians found or made no rule to distinguish the optative, potential, and subjunctive moods, the sense of which is very necessary to be frequently expressed; by a careful attention we may easily discover the characteristics of these moods comprehended in and expressed by the future tense. Thus, instead of *for he shall*, we may read in this verse, *that he may*, or *because he can*, &c. Pilkington, sect. 21.*

Ver. 18. Forgive all my sins] David joins this petition to the foregoing one, because he considered that, whatever afflictions and crosses were brought upon him, how unjust soever they might be with respect to his enemies, who were the apparent causes of them; yet, according to God's appointment or permission, they might be the effects and punishment of his sins.

Ver. 22. Redeem Israel, O God, &c.] "Have mercy, "not upon me only, but upon the whole nation; who are "miserably distracted by their divisions, and restore them "to peace and quietness;" for it is supposed that the psalm was written during the troubles occasioned by Absalom. Mudge apprehends that this is a detached sentence, in which the author shews his zeal for his country; and that it was the usual close of many of their sacred songs.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, David's troubles always brought him to prayer, and therein he ever found a sure relief. We have him here,

1. Approaching God under his afflictions, of whatever sort they were, and casting his care upon him. *Unto thee*

do I lift up my soul in prayer for support, or, as a sacred deposit, commend it to his keeping and care. O my God, I trust in thee, I fix my anchor within the veil, and amidst the storm contentedly wait the issue; since thou art my God, I am safe. Note; (1.) An interest in God's love is a sure protection from every foe (2.) The more our hearts are lifted up from earth to heaven, and, leaving these vanities, we place our supreme desire on the glories above, the more sure we are that our hope shall not be disappointed.

2. He prays for himself, and all who like him were afflicted, that neither he nor they might be ashamed of their confidence, or disappointed of their hope. *Let not mine enemies triumph over me*, as they soon would, if God should withdraw his kind support; but *let them be ashamed which transgress without cause* against me, who have never provoked them, or against thee the God of all mercy.

Note; (1.) While we are praying for ourselves, we must not forget our brethren, but be advocates for them, as they are for us. (2.) He that believeth, shall not be ashamed; the God of their confidence never faileth those who seek him. (3.) Though transgressors may appear for a while secure and triumphant in their wickedness, yet their day is coming, when everlasting confusion shall cover them.

3. He begs of God to direct and lead him in the right way of duty, to direct him in his worship and service, to enlighten his mind with all saving truth, and enable him to walk under the influence of it. And for this he pleads, because God is his salvation, on whom his soul depends, and because he waited on him all the day, in consequence of his promise to hear the prayer of his people.

4. He pleads the grace and promises of God in Jesus Christ, (the true Messiah,) which former saints ever experienced

P S A L. XXVI.

David resorteth unto God, in confidence of his integrity.

A Psalm of David.

JUDGE me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; *therefore* I shall not slide.

2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

3 For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

perceived in their days of trouble; and he humbly hopes that God will not forget to manifest the same grace, and fulfil the same promises, to him.

5. He begs pardon for transgressions, which from the womb began in a corrupted nature, and appeared from his youth up; for which should God enter into judgment with him, he must be utterly condemned: therefore he cries for mercy, and, disclaiming all merit, pleads only God's unbounded grace and goodness.

2dly, Having asked of God direction and support, he here promises himself that he shall find it.

Good and upright is the Lord, kind and gracious to his people, faithful to his promises, and equitable in his decisions; *therefore will he teach sinners in the way*; though they have offended and provoked him as I have done, yet, when they return, he will not reject them, he will shew them Christ the living way, who came to save sinners, and minister to them grace, that they may be enabled to walk in him, as souls ransomed by his blood. *The meek, the humbled under a sense of sin, he will guide in judgment*, giving them an understanding to know him that is true, and *teach his way* to them of justifying sinners, through the blood and merits of his dear Son. *For all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth*, all his promises flow from boundless mercy, and are the dictates of eternal truth; and all his providences are designed, with the most gracious intention, for his faithful people's good; so that they may confidently trust him, while in the way of duty they *keep his covenant and his testimonies*; hold fast the one as their rock, and follow the other as their holy path of duty, in which they desire to walk and please God: not that anything they can do is worthy of God's regard, seeing in their best estate they have need to cry, *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great. What man is he that feareth the Lord?* conscious of his guilt, and humbly confessing it before his offended God, *him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose*; the Lord shall order his goings and his footsteps shall not slide. *His soul shall dwell at ease*, relieved from every distressing fear, and enjoying the peace which flows from pardoned sin, or in goodness, as the word *בטוב* *betob* may be rendered, in the experience of God's love and favour; and *his seed shall inherit the earth*, a fulliency here below, and hereafter the promised land of eternal rest, the heavenly Canaan. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, his mysteries of

4 I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

5 I have hated the congregation of evil-doers; and will not sit with the wicked.

6 I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:

7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

providence and grace are opened to them; they are admitted into that happy communion with him, which is unknown to others, and *he will shew them his covenant* in Jesus Christ, and they shall fully see the accomplishment of all that is therein contained, when they come to his presence above. *Note*; (1.) None can come to God for pardon and grace, but those who feel experimentally their guilt and corruption. (2.) It is the same thing with God, to pardon many offences as few; so that the sense of the greatness of our sins should never keep us from him, but drive us to him. (3.) They who find mercy with God in Jesus Christ, are bound by every tie of love and duty to fear offending him, and to delight to please him in his holy ways. (4.) When we are so doing, all things shall work together for good to us, and sweet mercies spring from the most afflictive providences.

P S A L. XXVI.

Title.] *לדוד* *ledavid*. In this psalm David asserts his innocence so strongly, that we may conclude it was made before the preceding psalm, agreeably to the observation made on the title of that psalm. Theodoret supposes that David wrote it while he was among the Philistines, or in some other strange country, into which he was for some time forced by the persecution of Saul.

Ver. 1. *Judge me, O Lord*] *Plead for me, O Lord.*

Ver. 6. *I will wash mine hands in innocency*] It was a common custom among all the Jews to wash before prayers; but the priests in particular were not to perform any sacred office in the sanctuary till they had poured water out of the laver, and washed their hands in it. David alludes to this custom. But because those outward ablutions might still leave impurities within, which all the water in the world could not wash away, he here declares that he would *wash his hands in innocency itself*, which he elsewhere calls, *the cleanness of his hands*, Pf. xviii. 24. See note on Pf. vii. 7.

Ver. 8. *The habitation of thy house*] This certainly means the tabernacle, wherein the ark of God was kept, and where he manifested his peculiar presence by a visible and glorious appearance. Dr. Hammond says, that the *habitation of thy house* may, by apposition, be, *thy habitation-house*; as we say in English a *mansion-house*, i. e. a place for daily habitation; such as the tabernacle was to God; he having promised to be continually present there. See

Exod.

9 Gather not my soul with finners, nor my life with bloody men :

10 In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.

11 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity : redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

12 My foot standeth in an even place : in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

P S A L. XXVII.

David sustaineth his faith by the power of God, by his love to the service of God, and by prayer.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD is my light and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? the LORD is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid.

2 When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear : though war should rise against me, in this *will* I be confident.

4 One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion : in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me ; he shall set me up upon a rock.

6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me : there-

Exod. xxix. 42. 45. We may render the verse, *Lord, I have loved thy mansion-house, and the place of the tabernacle of thy glory.*

Ver. 9. Gather not] Unite not.

Ver. 12. My foot standeth in an even place] Mudge observes, that this is an answer to the first verse : he had said there, Let me not slide, for so it should be rendered : here he says, my foot standeth firm on plain ground.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The greatest innocence is no protection from the envenomed tongue of slander. It is well that there is a day coming which shall confute the calumnies of the wicked, and turn them with confusion on their own heads.

David here appeals to God for his integrity : not as upright in the sight of God, for there he pretended not to be justified ; but as innocent of the charges laid against him by Saul ; respecting which, he desires to submit to the heart-searching scrutiny of God, and to abide by his judgment, conscious that there was no just occasion of offence to be found in him ; and therefore trusting that God would espouse his righteous quarrel, and preserve him that he should not slide : neither fall before the malignity of his persecutors, nor be ensnared by the power of evil. *Note ; Under the basest misrepresentations, it is an unspeakable comfort to possess conscious innocence.*

2dly, As in the former part of the psalm we are told what company David avoided, in the latter we are informed what company he delighted in,—the worshippers of God.

He declares how he approached the courts of the Lord's house. *He washed his hands in innocency, washed in the blessed fountain, open for sin and for uncleanness ; and he kept back no allowed sin ; but, with a conscience void of offence, compassed God's altar ;* alluding to the priests who went round the altar, sprinkling the atoning blood on the four corners ; so would he wait continually upon God,

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pleading the blood of sprinkling, and offering the grateful sacrifice of praise. *That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wonderful works, works of mercy and grace so astonishing, that they deserve to be proclaimed for the comfort of his brethren and the glory of God. And this was not a mere slavish duty to satisfy conscience, or support a Pharisaical righteousness, no ; it was the very joy of his heart. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house ; there could I with pleasure ever abide, and the place where thine honour dwelleth, where in the divine Shechinah thy glory visibly appears.*

P S A L. XXVII.

*Title. לדוד ledavid.] The Greek title is, " A Psalm of David before he was anointed," alluding to 2 Sam. ii. 4. But what Bishop Patrick observes concerning this Psalm seems more probable from the contents of it ; namely, that David wrote it soon after his deliverance from that imminent danger mentioned 2 Sam. xxi. 17. when, by his pursuing the enemy too far, he was hemmed in, and would have been killed if Abishai had not succoured him. Upon this, we read, his subjects requested of him not to go out to battle any more ; in which view the Psalm represents David as breathing out the sentiments of a brave and good old man, who seems not conscious, that, though his spirits might hold out, yet his strength was much impaired by age, and therefore he was become very unfit to undergo the hazards of war. Thus then, we may suppose him to bespeak those who made the request before mentioned ; *The Lord is my light, &c.**

Ver. 2. To eat up my flesh] See Job, xxxi. 31. This expresses the utmost rancour or envy. There is the same expression in Eccles. iv. 5. where, as it should be translated, the fool is said to sit lazily with folded arms, and out of envy to eat the flesh of his diligent neighbours, whom he sees to thrive. Mudge.

Ver. 3. In this will I be confident] Yet would I rely upon this ;

fore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

9 Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

13 I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

this; namely, upon the divine protection; which is described in the two next periods, in the figurative terms of being admitted to dwell in the house of the Lord, where no enemy could approach to hurt him. See Psal. xxxi. 21. xci. 1. and Green.

Ver. 4. *The beauty of the Lord*] i. e. The cheering countenance of God, whose presence was more conspicuously manifested in his temple.

Ver. 8. *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, &c.*] The words, *when thou saidst* are not in the original. Bishop Hare inserts the word *אלהים* *elohim*, and reads it thus, *To thee, O my soul, God said, Seek ye my face; thy face, Lord, I will seek.* Houbigant renders it, *To thee said my heart, seek ye my face; thy face, Lord, will I seek.*

Ver. 13. *I had fainted, unless, &c.*] The words *I had fainted*, are not in the Hebrew. Dr. Hammond observes, that there is a very remarkable elegance in the original; which, by the use of a beautiful figure, makes an abrupt breaking off in the midst of the speech. He compares it to that celebrated threat of Neptune in Virgil:

Quos ego — Sed motos præstat componere fluctus;
Whom I — but first I'll calm the waves again.

PITT.

And he rightly adds, that the beauty of this figure, consisting in the abrupt breaking off, is wholly lost and spoiled by adding that which the divine poet purposely omitted or concealed. The Chaldee translation preserves this beauty; but all the rest, by filling up the break, or altering the sense a little, destroy it.

Ver. 14. *Wait on the Lord*] The Psalmist here admonishes any person who shall fall into such straits as his, to learn by his example not to be impatient, or to despond, much less despair of relief, if God do not happen to send it just when it is expected. *Woe unto you that have lost patience; and what will you do when the Lord shall visit you?* says the son of Sirach. There is no misery so strong and grievous, no devotion so fervent and powerful, as can bring God to article for the time of his deliverance; if we will not wait, he will not come. It may be one of the greatest ends for which the affliction that we labour under is applied to us, to reform and reduce, and root out the passion and impatience of our nature; and God is too good a physician to remove the medicine before it has wrought its effect, or to

put us out of his hand before he has cured us. Indeed, he has great reason to teach us this lesson thoroughly; since, when he has given us the deliverance we pray for, all that we can desire in this life, there is still somewhat more, and of more value than that which he has given us, which we must wait for: it is the claim and protestation which we must appear with at the day of judgment; *Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us.* Isa. xxv. 9. If we have no confidence in him, and of enjoying those pleasures with him in which he himself takes delight, it is no wonder if we faint, and have not courage enough to wait; but if we have that cordial, a belief, that, after all our humiliation here below, and after all the violence of our enemies, and being trampled on by them, we shall at last be so far lifted above them as to sit by him on his heavenly throne, the task will not be greater than we can through grace undergo, patiently to wait his time for the accomplishment of so transcendent an honour and favour to us.

REFLECTIONS.—If God be for us, who can be against us? If he be our salvation, how impotent the malice of every foe? We have here,

1. David's triumph over his enemies, through his interest in God's love. *The Lord is my light*, to point out my way, to cheer my heart, and to preserve me from all the darkness of evil and sin; *and my salvation*, whose grace watches over me, whose power protects me, and in whose arms I am safe from every danger; *whom shall I fear* under such a guardian? *The Lord is the strength of my life*, preserving me from every deadly blow that is aimed against me by my temporal or spiritual foes. My numerous adversaries have tried their utmost malice, but stumbled and fell; and, though they should renew their desperate attacks, no fear shall dismay me: my confidence is placed on him who cannot fail. Note; (1.) Without the light of God's word and Spirit, we must quickly stumble; but if these lead us, then shall we walk safely. (2.) Our fears are often apt to beset us from the views of the multitude or greatness of our dangers; but if our faith fail not, our fears cannot prevail. (3.) Christ is our life; till the well-spring which is in him fails, the faithful believer cannot faint. (4.) It is our duty and comfort to despair of ourselves, and be confident in God.

2. His

P S A L. XXVIII.

David prayeth [or prophesieth] earnestly against his enemies: he bleisseth God; he prayeth for the people.

A Psalm of David.

UNTO thee will I cry, O LORD, my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.

2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.

3 Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.

4 Give them according to their deeds, and

according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.

5 Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them and not build them up.

6 Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

8 The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.

9 Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

2. His prayer. *One thing have I desired of the Lord; not to return to his own house, not to be reinstated at court, but to be admitted to the more desirable courts of the Lord's house; there he could wish to dwell for ever, such delight had he in the ordinances of the sanctuary; to behold the beauty of the Lord, the priests in their vestments, the sacrifices smoking on the altar, and all the glory of that worldly sanctuary; and from these outward symbols to contemplate the glories of the great high-priest, and perfect sacrifice of the Messiah, to whom all this shadowy service pointed; and to inquire in his temple, to ask direction in every difficulty; and in prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make his requests known unto God. There he promised himself safety and security, hid under the sacred pavilion of the Divine Majesty, and firmly seated, as on a rock, which all his enemies, like boisterous waves, assail in vain. Therefore, because of such protection, will I offer in his tabernacle, though now absent from it, yet confident of again returning, sacrifices of joy, the grateful overflowings of a heart filled with the love, and big with the praises, of a gracious God. Note; (1.) God's sanctuary is the believer's delight; he would dwell there now, and he hopes to have his abode in it shortly for ever. (2.) They who are hid under the wing of Almighty grace, and are blest with manifestations of the beauty of the Lord as their God and Saviour, are not only safe, but happy, amidst a host of enemies. (3.) Praise is the just tribute that we owe, and should daily render, for mercies without number and without end.*

P S A L. XXVIII.

Title. לדוד ledavid.] This Psalm, as well as the foregoing, is supposed to have been written by David towards the latter end of his reign; at a time when, his wars being almost finished, some of his own subjects, probably those of Sheba's party, mentioned 2 Sam. xx. took an opportunity to give him some disturbance. This Psalm, says Mudge, has several states. In the first five verses the author prays

for support against his enemies, who seem to have acted treacherously: in the 6th and 7th he has gained the victory, and returns triumphant with songs: the 8th is a chorus of people, or priests, echoing back the words of the preceding verse: the last verse seems to be a prayer of the king for the people, in return to their acclamations for him.

Ver. 1. Be not silent to me] Do not keep off from me. Mudge. Compare Psal. xxxv, 22.

Ver. 4. Render to them their desert] Their own rendering; as they have rendered to others. This verse would be translated better in the future: Thou wilt give them, &c. See the next verse.

Ver. 8. The Lord is their strength] The Lord is his guard; even he himself is the triumphant guard of his anointed. So Mudge; who observes, that the words are evidently spoken by the people, or priests, returning the words which the king had just before used. Houbigant renders it, The Lord is the strength of his people; and indeed our translation, as it now stands, plainly refers to the people in the next verse.

Ver. 9. Lift them up for ever] Support them for ever. "Feed them, as a shepherd does his flock, and support them for ever by thy goodness and mercy." See Psal. xxiii. and Fenwick.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Whither shall the miserable fly, but to the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation? To this rock, with fervour and importunity, the Psalmist has recourse, and cries for help and refuge.

1. He pleads his certain and impending ruin, if God did not hear and succour him; his enemies would then bring him to the dust of death; in God's absence, his soul would taste the pains of hell; and if utterly forsaken by him, the dreadful pit would yawn to receive him; but he trusted God would hear when he lifted up his hands, which, with ceaseless importunity, he continued to do, towards his holy oracle; before the most holy place, where the Shechinah

P S A L . XXIX.

David exhorteth princes to give glory to God, by reason of his power, and protection of his people.

A Psalm of David.

GIVE unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.
2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto

rested, and whence God's oracles were given; or towards heaven, of which the Holy of Holies was the figure. *Note;* (1.) Deep distress should awaken strong cries, and there is one who hears, that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. (2.) Christ is the true oracle, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and through him our humble prayers are sure to succeed.

2. He intreats to be saved from the ways and end of the workers of iniquity. They sought to intice him with fair words, but mischief was in their hearts; he knew the evil of their ways, and hated them; he knew the ruin of their end, and would fain avoid it: yet, knowing his own weakness, and proneness to evil, he looks out of himself for power, even to him who is mighty to save. *Note;* (1.) In the eyes of a child of God, sin is regarded as the greatest of evils. (2.) Seducing spirits are ever busy to deceive in every age. The Lord preserve us from error! (3.) They who would avoid the sinner's ruin, must shun his ways.

3. He foretels the miserable end of the wicked, from whom he prayed to be delivered. *Give them, or thou wilt give them,* not as making it the matter of his prayer out of revenge or ill-will, but as foreseeing this would be the case, and praying that God might be glorified in his judgments, according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours; for not only outward acts of sin, but the inward purpose of it, is minuted in God's book; not a thought of wickedness passes unnoticed by him: as their deserts require, they will receive at God's hands; and because they pay no regard to his word, or the admonitions of his providence, destruction to the uttermost will overtake them. *Note;* (1.) In a judgment-day, when the sinner's heart is laid open, a scene of wickedness will be discovered, such as the sun never beheld. (2.) Inattention to God's works, word, and warnings, is one chief cause of the sinner's ruin.

2dly, Who ever trusted in God and was confounded, or called upon his name in vain? The Psalmist's praises ever succeed his prayers.

1. He blesses God for the answer of peace that he had given him: either he had received his request, or faith so realized the promises, that he reckoned that as already bestowed which he was assured God would grant. *Note;* The mercies that faith assures us of receiving, are matter of praise, as well as those which we already enjoy.

2. He professes his firm dependance upon God, and thankful acknowledgment to him. *The Lord is my strength,* by whose everlasting arms I am upheld; *my shield,* constantly spread over me to protect me from every danger: *my heart trusted in him,* when surrounded with enemies; and *I am helped,* experience his promise fulfilled; therefore

his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters.

4 The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

my heart greatly rejoiceth; a joy unspeakable and glorious warmed his inmost soul, and songs of melody and love, spoke aloud the praise that he owed to his deliverer. *Note;* The end of worldly joy is heaviness; but the more a soul rejoiceth in God, the more heavenly his spirit grows.

3. As interested in the prosperity of God's people, he rejoices that they have the same Almighty Saviour. *The Lord is their strength,* to support them in every time of need, and he is the saving strength of his anointed; of David, his king; of Messiah, the people's hope, on whom their help is laid; and of every believer who receives an unction from the Holy One, and is consecrated unto God a king and priest. *Note;* God's people rejoice in each other's happiness as their own, for they are members of the same body.

4. He prays for the prosperity and salvation of all God's Israel; that no enemy might prevail against them; that all the blessings of providence and grace might descend upon them; that he would feed them as the dear flock of his pasture, or rule them with his gentle sway, and make them a willing people; and not only lift them up above all their foes on earth, but eternally exalt them to a throne of glory, where all that hate them should be for ever put under their feet. *Note;* (1.) They who love the people of God, will daily make an affectionate remembrance of them in their prayers. (2.) They who are saved by grace, fed by God's ordinances, and governed by God's Spirit, shall surely reign with him in glory, and none beside.

P S A L . XXIX.

Title. מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד *mizmor ledavid.*] This Psalm seems to have been composed by David after an extraordinary storm of thunder, lightning, and rain; whereby, it is probable, God had so discomfited his enemies, (See 2 Sam. viii.) and put their forces into such disorder, that he easily got the victory over them; and therefore he here exhorts them to submit themselves to that glorious majesty from whom the thunder came, and who can with the greatest ease strike a sudden terror into the hearts of his stoutest and most resolute opposers. As there are many Psalms which point to a great victory obtained with this circumstance of remarkable thunder, it is more reasonable to believe, that they were all made upon the same occasion, than that they had each their several occasion to call them forth.

Ver. 1. O ye mighty] *Ye sons of divinities.* Mudge. בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים *beni elim:* Ye princes and governors of the heathen people.

Ver. 3. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters] *The voice of the Lord was over the waters, (the God of glory thundered) of the Lord, over great waters.* This, with the deluge mentioned ver. 10., shews that there were violent rains.

Ver.

5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

7 The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.

10 The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.

11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

Ver. 5. Cedars of Lebanon] This may be an allegorical description of the conquest over the Syrians, who lived near Lebanon. See Psal. xcii. 12. 2 Sam. viii. and Grotius.

Ver. 6. And Sirion] A high mountain on the other side of the river Jordan, near the country of the Ammonites, known also by the names of *Hemmon* and *Sbenir*. See Deut. iii. 9. Bishop Hare thinks the passage should be read, *And he maketh them to skip, Lebanon like a calf, and Sirion like a young unicorn, rhinoceros, or ox.* If by *Lebanon* we are to understand allegorically the Syrians; by *Sirion* may be meant the *Ammonites*; and in this view it is not improbable that the two animals here mentioned were either borne in the standards of these people, or the hieroglyphics used to denote them.

Ver. 7, 8. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames, &c.] i. e. Casteth out several flashes of lightning: the original word חוצב *chotzeb* signifies to cut out, divide, or distribute; so the thunder, or, the voice of the Lord, is said to send forth the lightning; which is, indeed, the precursor of the thunder; the cause and not the effect of it. The *thunder*, however, or *voice of the Lord*, is here with great beauty and propriety considered as that which commands and distributes the lightning. *Shaketh the wilderness*, is rendered by Bishop Hare, *maketh the desert tremble*. Respecting *Kadesh*, See Numb. xxxiii. 36, 37.

Ver. 9. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve] Mr. Fenwick translates this verse,

The mighty oaks Jehovah's voice shall feel;
Twill lay the woods and forests bare;
All things his glory in his temple speak:

And he refers to Bishop Lowth's Prelections, p. 271. quarto, for a proof that the Hebrew should be thus rendered. The original is אילות יזולל *yecholel aialoth*; i. e. *dolore afficit quercus*, says the Bishop, for אלה *eilah*, or אילה or *aialah*, is an oak; in which sense it frequently occurs in the plural number and masculine gender, with a 'jod, inserted: And so Syrus interprets it. This is vulgarly interpreted of *hinds*, which neither agrees with the other images in that place, nor yet with the nature and dignity of the subject. Mr. Mudge translates it, *The voice of the Lord frightened the hinds, and laid bare the woods; and in his temple the whole of it spoke glory*; i. e. says he, "it struck off all the leaves and small boughs, and by that means left the hinds exposed to view. The latter part seems to intend some glorious appearance round the temple; wrapped up perhaps in flames, or something of that kind; so that the thunder might seem to be directed from thence." This Psalm possibly is ex-

plained by Psal. lxxvi. 4. *Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey*, i. e. mount Sion, and the other mountains of Jerusalem, which the Assyrians had destined for their plunder. It may be proper just to observe from Dr. Hammond, in vindication of the common version, that hinds are said by naturalists to bring forth with great difficulty; and as fear is supposed to facilitate delivery, and this animal is remarkably timorous, the sound of thunder may be supposed to effect it, and hasten its delivery. Compare Job, xxxix. 1. *As Kadesh* in the former verse may poetically signify the kings and people both of the Edomites and Moabites, who were *terribly shaken*, that is, subdued by David; so this verse may represent the greatness of their consternation.

Ver. 10. The Lord sitteth upon the flood] *The Lord sat upon the deluge*. "The Lord sat, and shall for ever sit, king over all this tremendous scene of desolation; directing it as he pleases, to the good of his people, and the confusion of their enemies." See Mudge and Houbigant. Bishop Hare, supposing the verse to refer to the deluge, has this gloss upon it: "This is the same God, who in Noah's flood sat as judge, and sent that destruction upon the earth." The verse seems more naturally to allude to the thunder-storm and shower here described.

REFLECTIONS.—The Psalm opens,

1. With a solemn admonition to all living, to render unto the Lord the glory due to his name. Let mighty angels bow in heaven, and mighty kings on earth fall prostrate at his feet, ascribing to him infinite power and eternal majesty, and *worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*: either the tabernacle, where his magnificent and holy worship was paid, or with that holiness of heart and temper which is the beauty of all worship. *Note*; (1.) The greatest are not too high to bow at God's footstool; kings should set their subjects the good example. (2.) Repeated calls show our backwardness, and the need we have to be urged to the service and worship of the blessed God. (3.) It is not the formal ceremony of words, but the beauty of holiness in the heart, which in our worship God especially regards.

2. He gives a reason why they should worship this glorious God: his name is *Jehovah*, which is eighteen times repeated in these few verses, and intimates his self-existent and eternal excellence, which renders him the object of universal worship and praise; and his works declare his majesty, power, and greatness; his voice speaks in mighty thunders, while dark clouds of the sky are spread under him; the forked lightnings glare around, the earth trembles

P S A L. XXX.

David praiseth God for his deliverances: he exhorteth others to praise him by the example of God's dealing with him.

A Psalm and Song, at the dedication of the house of David.

I WILL extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

trembles at the terrible shock; and mountains, as affrighted, leap from their wide-spread bases; the cedars of Lebanon are shivered as the brittle reed, the beasts that lodge under their branches, affrighted, cast their burdens; and gloomy forests, before the resistless storm, stripped of their verdure, admit the flashing beam; while He, the mighty God, with majesty composed, sitteth upon the flood, and, as the eternal King, illues his mandate as in the deluge, saying, hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and every element hears, and instantly obeys. *Note;* when God's thunder is near, and his floods of rain, mingled with fire, descend, let us think of this dread majesty, and bow before him; how glorious to have him our friend, how terrible to meet him as our enemy!

The whole may also be well applied to Christ; his voice, loud as these thunders, speaks to many people, kindreds, and nations, powerful to awaken, convince, and convert the soul: the proudest sinners, though like cedars of Lebanon, are broken before it; and, though fast rooted in sin as the mountain's base, yet by Christ's glorious word their bands are loosed; piercing and strong as the glaring beams of lightning, his gospel in the midst of darkness pours a flood of day upon the soul, and kindles up a fire of love in the heart, which many waters cannot quench: the wilderness of the Gentile world was shaken before it, and saving discoveries made to them of the glory of God; pangs came upon them at first, as sorrows of a woman in travail; but they were succeeded by the joys of Christ formed in them; he sitteth now as king over our hearts, and over the hearts of his faithful people for ever; and in the temple of his church on earth, and his more magnificent sanctuary in heaven, his majesty and glory shall be the theme of everlasting praise.

3. The Psalmist concludes with a comfortable prospect for God's faithful people. He will give them strength against every danger; and bless them with his peace, which passeth all understanding; internal peace, from a present sense of God's favour in Christ; and eternal peace, when the floods of wrath and the deluge of fire shall sweep away the ungodly for ever.

P S A L. XXX.

Title. מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר *mizmor shiir.* A psalm and song, &c.] This excellent composition is well suited to the occasion on which it was penned: for nothing could be more proper than the recollection of the past conduct of Providence, amid the various changes of condition which had attended David, the numerous and dangerous distresses that had befallen him, and the deliverances which God had seasonably

2 O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

3 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

wrought out for him; till, at length, he was brought to the height of prosperity, when he saw Jerusalem well fortified, and her numerous buildings rising up under his hand, and his own palace magnificently finished for the residence of himself and family. This psalm is penned with great strength and elegance of diction, and the sentiments of piety in it are truly noble and instructive. The manner in which he describes the interpositions of God's favour, and the gratitude of his own heart, is warm, sententious, and affecting; the periods being short, generally without the connective particles, and answering to the events which crowded fast one after another, and the various affections which inspired him. Nor should the excellent design of it be forgotten; which is to put men in mind of the folly and vanity of that presumption which causes them to forget themselves, and fondly depend on the continuance of their external prosperity; and to shew them, that when their expectations of this kind are highest, they may then be nearest to a severe disappointment by a sudden reverse of their circumstances; in order more effectually to convince them, that, as all their prosperity is originally from God, the continuance of it depends solely on his favour. And, on the other hand, we are instructed, that all the afflictions of life are under a divine direction; that we should never despair, but should apply ourselves to God, when exercised with them, by frequent supplication, and hope in his mercy, who can and will deliver us out of them, if, upon the whole, it be necessary to promote our best and highest happiness. Dr. Chandler.

At the dedication of the house of David] The original word הַנְּכֹחַ *chanukkah* signifies to initiate, or the first use which is made of any thing. It was common, when any person had finished a house and entered into it, to celebrate it with great rejoicings, and keep a festival, to which his friends were invited, and to perform some religious ceremonies to procure the protection of heaven. See Deut. xx. v.

Ver. 1. *Thou hast lifted me up*] Or, *Thou hast drawn me up.* The verb דָּלַח *dalah* is used in its original meaning, to denote the reciprocating motion of the buckets of a well; one descending as the other rises, and *vice versa*; and it is here applied, with admirable propriety, to point out the various reciprocations and changes of David's fortunes, as described in this psalm, as to prosperity and adversity; and particularly that gracious reverse of his afflicted condition which he now celebrates, God having raised him up to great honour and prosperity; for, having built his palace, he perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom, for his people Israel's sake. 2 Sam. v. 12. and see Schultens on Prov. xx. 5. and Chandler.

Ver.

5 For his anger *endureth* but a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

6 And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

7 LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled.

8 I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.

9 What profit *is* there in my blood, when

I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper.

11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;

12 To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Ver. 2. Thou hast healed me] The original verb **רפא** *rapa* is used either for the healing of bodily disorders, Pf. ciii. 3. or to denote the happy alteration of any person's affairs, either in public or private life, by the removal of any kind of distress, personal or national. Pf. cvii. 20. Isai. xix. 22. So in the place before us, *Thou hast healed me*, means, "Thou hast brought me out of my distresses; hast restored my health, and rendered me safe and prosperous." Under Saul he was frequently in the most imminent danger of his life, out of which God wonderfully brought him: this he strongly expresses by saying, *Thou hast brought up my soul from sheol*: ver. 3. *Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit*. "I thought myself lost, and saw nothing to prevent my destruction; and I can scarcely help looking on the deliverance that thou hast vouchsafed me, otherwise than as a kind of resurrection from the dead."

Ver. 4. Give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness] The *holiness* of God here refers particularly to his truth and faithfulness to his promises, which argues the rectitude and sanctity of his nature. Of this David had the highest and most comfortable assurance, God having at last brought him to the throne, and settled him in the possession of it, notwithstanding he was often reduced to the greatest hazard of his life, and his advancement to the kingdom seemed, according to all human probability, almost impossible. Chandler.

Ver. 5. For his anger endureth but a moment] There is but a moment in his anger; life and happiness in his favour: weeping may come to lodge with us in the evening, but singing shall dwell with us in the morning. The accomplishment of God's promises must, as to the season of it, be left to the disposal of his all-wise providence; and there may be a considerable time, and many afflictions, between the giving of the promise and the performance of it. Good men, however, shall not finally be disappointed; and, though some events may seem to be arguments of his displeasure towards them, yet, as the Psalmist found by his own experience, the duration of his anger is but short; comparatively, *but for a moment*; but the effects of his favour substantial and durable. His favour *is* **חיים** *chaim*, lives; i.e. long life, and lasting happiness of life, are the sure effects of it. Weeping may come to lodge with us in the evening. Its stay will be short, like a guest who lodges with us only for a night; but in the morning singing for joy shall return, and abide with us. These are poetical illus-

trations of the shortness of God's anger, and the permanent effects of his favour, which the Psalmist further illustrates by his own example.

Ver. 6, 7. And in my prosperity I said] There should not be a full stop at the end of the 6th verse, but after the words *stand strong* in the 7th; where the next period should begin, *Thou didst hide thy face; I was troubled*. The word **שָׁלוֹם** *shalev* rendered *prosperity*, denotes peace and tranquillity, arising from an affluent prosperous condition. When God had settled him quietly on the throne, he thought that all his troubles were over, and that he should enjoy uninterrupted happiness; that God had made his mountain so strong that it should never be moved: i.e. had placed him secure from all danger, as though he had taken refuge in an inaccessible mountain; or made his prosperity firm, and no more subject to alteration than a mountain is liable to be removed out of its place; or raised him to an eminent degree of honour and prosperity; a mountain by its height being a very natural representation of a superior condition, remarkable for power, affluence, and dignity. He had taken the fortress of Mount Zion, which was properly *his mountain*, as he had fixed upon it for his dwelling: it was strong by nature, and rendered almost impregnable by the fortifications that he had added to it. This he regarded as the effect of God's favour to him, and promised himself that his peace and happiness for the future should be as undisturbed and unshaken as Mount Zion itself. To *hide one's face*, is to refuse to see, or be seen, by another, and argues displeasure, and a denial of assistance and favour. The Psalmist means, that when God withdrew his protection, displeased with his presumption and the security that he had fondly promised himself, he was immediately disturbed by fresh troubles, and his dream of uninterrupted tranquillity vanished. He refers, I believe, to the two invasions of the Philistines, soon after they found that he had been anointed king over Israel. 2 Sam. v. 17, &c. In this unexpected distress, *he cried unto the Lord*, and in his supplication said as in ver. 9, 10. Chandler.

Ver. 9. What profit, &c.] *What gain can there be by my blood? When I go down into the pit, can my dust praise thee? Can it declare thy faithfulness?* There is a propriety in asking, *Shall the dust praise thee?* when the body goes down and moulders in the grave, which does not immediately appear in the common version. The Psalmist expostulates with God, that the suffering him to fall by the sword of

P S A L. XXXI.

David, shewing his confidence in God, craveth his help: he rejoiceth in his mercy: he prayeth in his calamity: he praiseth God for his goodness.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.

2 Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.

3 For thou *art* my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

4 Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou *art* my strength.

the enemy would be of no benefit to his people, nor to the cause of religion, as he would thereby be prevented from publicly celebrating the praises of God, and making those regulations in the solemnity of his worship which he purposed to do, if God would spare his life, and give him the victory. Chandler.

Ver. 12. To the end that my glory, &c.] The Philistines had invaded David soon after his establishment on the throne, and before he had taken possession of his new-built palace; so that he was engaged in fresh difficulties, and could not enjoy the tranquillity which he promised himself. In this unexpected exigency he applied himself to God; and the effect was, his being soon delivered out of all his fears, by the utter defeat of his enemies; which he describes by the pleasing expression of God's turning his mourning into dancing; putting off his sackcloth, and girding him with gladness. He had now an opportunity of dedicating his house, and taking possession of it, with all those tokens of joy which were usual on such occasions; and with those solemn praises to God which he owed him as his great deliverer, and the kind author of his prosperity. The word *my* not being in the original, this clause might be better rendered, *That every one may sing glory to thee, and not be silent*: "They who celebrate with me the dedication of my house, and all my people who see and share in my prosperity." Chandler.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Every house of a child of God will be a sanctuary where prayer and praise are daily offered.

1. David begins with the voice of thanksgiving for the mercies that he had tasted; his foes sought his ruin, he was sick perhaps in body, and afflicted in mind; the grave seemed to be open to receive him; but he cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his troubles; therefore he well resolves, *I will extol thee, for thou hast lifted me up*; will declare thy greatness and goodness, and ascribe the whole of my salvation to thy power and grace. *Note*; (1.) We brought into the world with us the disease of mortal corruption; it is matter of unpeakable joy, if, by the blood and grace of Jesus, our dying souls are healed. (2.) Recoveries from sickness deserve songs of praise, and that the life preserved by God's mercy be anew devoted to his glory. (3.) In all afflictive cases, whether of body or mind, the prayer of faith availeth much,—always for consolation, and frequently for bodily health.

2. He calls upon others to join in the song of praise. *Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his*: this is the character of God's people; they are separated from sin, and by di-

vine grace renewed in righteousness and true holiness; and therefore they give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness; pleased with beholding this glorious attribute of their God; satisfied in the righteousness of all his ways, and deriving comfort from the consideration that, as in a measure they resemble him now, they shall shortly awake up in his perfect image. *For his anger endureth but a moment*; not that we are to impute to him any such imperfection or turbulence in his holy mind as we feel; but, according as men chastise in anger those who offend them, God deals thus with those who sin against him; but to true believers, even this is not the stroke of an enemy, but the rod of a father, gently correcting us for our good. *In his favour is life*; spiritual life, eternal life, which is the sure portion of the faithful, notwithstanding momentary afflictions. *Weeping may endure for a night*; and some wearisome nights our sins and folly provoke God to make us feel, when he withdraws, and darkness and distress surround us; *but joy cometh in the morning*; the season of sorrow is short; and, as the welcome sun returning dispels the shadows of the night, so does God return to lift up the light of his countenance on his mourning saints, and wakens up their joyful praises. *Note*; In all our troubles here, we should remember that they are light afflictions, and but for a moment; the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which is to follow, will abundantly compensate.

2dly, We are ever apt to be running to extremes, too elated with comfort, or too dejected in distress. This was David's case:

1. In his prosperity he grew secure, confident that he should never be moved: his foes all vanquished, and his throne firmly settled, he thought himself fixed as a mountain: and, though he ascribes it to divine grace, he seems to place some trust of his stability on himself. *Note*; Worldly prosperity is dangerously intoxicating; it is what lulls men in general asleep.

2. Trouble overtook him; and dejection of soul, from the fear of God's favour being withdrawn, sunk him low into the dust, yet not into despair; he *cried unto the Lord, and made his supplication*; finding his weakness, and feeling now where alone his strength lay, he pleads hard for mercy and help in this his time of need. *Note*; In our lowliest frames, let nothing drive us from prayer; as long as we cry to God, there is hope in our end.

3. Soon the glad change appears; while he is speaking, God answers; his sorrows turn to joy; his mourning is ended, and songs of melody and love declare the praises of him who brought him out of darkness into his

5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit : thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

6 I have hated them that regard lying vanities : but I trust in the LORD.

7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy : for thou hast considered my trouble : thou hast known my soul in adversities.

8 And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy : thou hast set my feet in a large room.

9 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble : mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.

10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing : my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance : they that did see me without fled from me.

12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of

mind : I am like a broken vessel.

13 For I have heard the slander of many : fear was on every side : while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD : I said, Thou art my God.

15 My times are in thy hand : deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant : save me for thy mercy's sake.

17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD ; for I have called upon thee : let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.

18 Let the lying lips be put to silence ; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men !

his marvellous light : such experience engages his glory, his soul, his tongue to praise God for ever ; and these lively expressions of his gratitude he trusts shall not only last while life and breath endure below, but be perpetuated through the countless ages of eternity. Go then, thou redeemed soul, and do likewise.

P S A L. XXXI.

Titk. לִמְנוּחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד lamnatseach mizmor le-david.] Bishop Patrick supposes this psalm to have been composed by David soon after the straits to which he was reduced in the wilderness of Maon, when he fled from Keilah, and was so closely pursued by Saul, that, without the extraordinary protection of God, he would infallibly have fallen into his hands. But Mudge is of a different opinion: "There are," says he, "many strokes "in this psalm which point us to the prophet Jeremiah "for its author. The 13th verse begins with exactly the "same words as are found Jer. xx. 10. The account of his "enemies agrees well with the people of Anathoth, who had "plotted to take away his life, and in a treacherous manner, "by drawing him in to say things on which they might "ground a charge : the miraculous preservation he found at "Jerusalem during the siege, ver. 19—21. where others "suffered extremely, is another proof."

Ver. 5. Into thine hand, &c.] i. e. "To thy care and "custody I commit my life, or my breath, as the word "רוּחַ ruach, signifies, as well as the spirit or soul ; and the "breath, being the sign of life, may here be taken for life "itself." But our Saviour used these words, when expiring on the cross, in a more proper and literal sense than

they can be applied to David. See Luke xxiii. 46. He used them, says St. Augustin, to let us see that he is the person speaking in this psalm : most probably, with a design to convince the Jews, that, though suffering, he was the Messiah, and that son of David who should sit on his throne for ever. Mudge renders the last clause, "Thou hast purchased me, O Lord God of truth ; i. e. I am thy own "property. I have been thine from the womb, and destined "to thy service."

Ver. 9. My belly.] Such is the signification of the original word בֶּטֶן beten ; but it evidently means his body, and is therefore very properly so translated by Fenwick and Green.

Ver. 10. My strength faileth, &c.] My strength faul- ters by reason of my affliction. Mudge and Houbigant.

Ver. 13. For I have heard the slander, &c.] For I hear the evil talk of the people : terror on every side : while they consult together against me, and plot to take away my life. This and the preceding verses are plainly applicable to our Redeemer, and to that life of sorrow and reproach which he led amongst men.

Ver. 15. My times.] עֲתָתַי ittotai, are those critical times of danger, when life is reduced to turn upon a point.

Ver. 19. Thy goodness, which thou hast laid up, &c.] Which thou treasurest up for those who fear thee ; which thou providest for those who make thee their refuge, before the sons of men. Mudge and Green. The next verse should be rendered also in the present tense, Thou hidest them, thou keepst them. The phrase, In the secret of thy presence, refers to the sanctuary, the peculiar place of God's residence. "Those "who trust in him shall be as safe in his protection, as "if they were immediately lodged in the sanctuary."

K

Ver.

20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed

me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

22 For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

Ver. 21. He hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city] Mudge renders it, agreeably to his idea of the author and occasion of the psalm, *a besieged city*; as that seems to be a scene more adapted for the manifestation of kindness than a *strong* one; and Jeremiah was fed with a certain portion from the king during the siege. Others, however, who think the composition to be David's, suppose that the place refers to David's situation in Keilah; where when he consulted God whether the inhabitants would deliver him up, God shewed him distinguished kindness in revealing to him their intended treachery. 1 Sam. xxiii. 12. Mudge renders the next clause, *ver. 22. For I had said in my hurry*; and Green, *I said indeed, in my flight*; i. e. when Saul pursued him in the wilderness of Maon, after he had escaped from Keilah.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The greatest of our trials need not discourage us, while we have a great God to support us: to him David has recourse in all his needs.

1. As usual, he opens with earnest and importunate prayer. All his help and hope came from above; thither, therefore, he directs his supplications.

2. He professes his fixed dependance upon God. *In thee do I put my trust*; not in my own righteousness, as deserving aught at thy hands; not in my own wisdom, as able to extricate myself; not in my own strength, as sufficient to support me; but in thy wisdom, righteousness, and strength, as my only refuge; *for thou art my rock*, fixed and immoveable, and *my fortress*, impregnable and secure: *thou art my strength*, to work for me and in me; and therefore *into thine hand I commit my spirit*, to be preserved in life, amid surrounding dangers; to be kept from evil, amid the snares which are laid for me; and to be secured for eternity, however thy providence may dispose of me here below: *thou hast redeemed me*, rescued my body from many a danger, and by atoning blood delivered my soul from hell, *O Lord God of truth*, whose promises I have ever experienced to be faithful and sure. *Note*; (1.) They who have God for their rock, need not fear whosoever are their foes. (2.) If our spirits are safe lodged in the arms of Jesus, we may quietly wait the issue of every affliction, and know that the end will be peace. (3.) The more we are enabled to trust in God's promise, the stronger testimony we bear to his faithfulness.

3. He renounces all connection with idols, and all recourse to those vanities in his distresses; he hated the ways of all their worshippers, and cleaved to Jehovah alone. *Note*; God is an all-sufficient portion; we need look for nothing more to make us safe and happy.

4. He rejoices in the mercy of his gracious God. His troubles God had considered with tenderest compassion; and in adversities known his soul, approved his temper, and visited him with notices of kind regard. Escaped from the spot where he was in danger, he enjoys now a happy

deliverance, and walks at large with no foe to molest him. *Note*; (1.) Mercies deserve a constant return of praise. (2.) Our spirit and temper in time of trouble, will best shew our state towards God. (3.) It is the comfort of God's people in every state, that he knows their simplicity, and regards them with his favour.

The words in the beginning of the 5th verse, being used by our divine Lord on the cross, may well support us in applying the whole to him; whose prayer in trouble, unshaken dependance on God, deliverance from adversity, and exaltation above his enemies, were infinitely more distinguished than those of his illustrious progenitor.

2dly, Swift as Job's messengers of evil are the returns of trouble, and therefore call for as repeated application to the God of all grace.

1. David spreads before God his bitter sorrows; with constant tears his eyes grew dim, his appetite failed him, his strength decayed, his very bones wasted; and his soul, in equal anguish with his body, was ready to sink under its burdens; and this by reason of his iniquity. His other trials were light, compared with these: in all his sufferings from man, he had his integrity to comfort him; but here he stood self-condemned, and owns his afflictions less than his iniquity deserved: his former companions, who should comfort him, now desert him; all his past kindness to them is forgotten; and since he can no longer serve them, like a broken vessel, he is thrown by and neglected; his enemies reproach him with every malignant accusation; and, as it was become dangerous to show the least regard to him, as Ahimelech had experienced, his once familiar friends now are afraid to know him, and care not to meet him, lest the smallest civilities should be to their prejudice: he heard the slander which was propagated on every side, and fear seized him when he knew that they were plotting to take away his life. *Note*; (1.) They who place dependance on worldly friendships will usually, to their sad disappointment, find them faithless. (2.) They who have taken Christ for their master must expect to meet with similar slights and insults; it is no uncommon case, then for our nearest relations to disown us, and our once dearest friends to be ashamed of us. Welcome reproach! if this be to be vile, let us be viler still. (3.) The Redeemer of souls endured all this and more; an outcast, despised, and abhorred, and persecuted by restless malice, till in his precious blood his enemies embued their guilty hands.

2. He places his trust in God under every discouraging prospect. *I said, Thou art my God*; and this was enough to quiet every fear, and comfort him in every distress; for if God were his, then all things would work together for his good, and he could quietly resign up himself to him. *My times are in thy hand*, to dispose of me, and do by me as shall seem best in thy sight; thou knowest the properest time for my deliverance; my days cannot be shortened but with thy permission, nor my troubles of body or soul continue

23 O love the LORD all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

P S A L. XXXII.

Blessedness consisteth in remission of sins. Confession of sins giveth ease to the conscience. God's promises bring joy.

A Psalm of David, Maschil.

BLESSED is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

tinue a moment longer than thou sufferest; and all events concerning me are safe, being in thy disposal. *Note;* This is a most comfortable and quieting consideration to every child of God.

3. While he waits in faith, he prays in hope. Our patient submission forbids not humble prayer; he begs, therefore, that God would deliver him from his persecutors, comfort him with a sweet sense of his favour, and save him for his mercies' sake, the only plea that he presumes to make: he prays to be kept from shame, as if his hope was delusive, or his prayer fruitless; and that the wicked, who wished him evil, might be confounded at his deliverance: and, finally, he makes of God a general request in behalf of all his righteous ones, that the lying lips, which insolently, contemptuously, and cruelly revile them, might be sealed up in silence. *Note;* (1.) A wicked world stops at no lies to hurt the people of God. (2.) The most respectable characters, when engaged in the cause of Christ and true religion, must expect to meet with insolence and contempt. (3.) The day is coming when sinners must answer for all their hard speeches, which cruelly, disdainfully, and despitefully, they have spoken against the righteous. (4.) Though it is our duty to forgive every insult and injury, and to pray for our enemies, that God would forgive them too, we may at the same time safely cry for the coming of Christ's glorious kingdom, when the finally-impenitent, and despisers of those who are good, will be for ever sealed up under eternal vengeance.

3dly, The more we experience of God's grace and mercy towards us, the more shall we be filled with wonder, love, and praise.

1. The Psalmist breaks out into wonder. O how great is thy goodness! how transcendentally blessed its effects! how graciously free its communications! and how amazingly extensive, even to the days of eternity; laid up as an invaluable treasure, and secured as a sacred deposit for them that fear thee! This is a distinguishing character of God's people; they fear him, and nothing in comparison with him; let men threaten, or revile, they will not be moved to do evil, and rather would lay down their lives than offend God: and which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men; either God's special goodness to his people is manifested to men by his providential care and deliverance of them; or they make public and open profession of their dependance upon him, and glorify God thereby, even amidst all the threatenings of their adversaries. *Thou shalt hide them, when hunted by the malice of their foes, in the secret of thy presence; secure from harm, satisfied in thy love, comforted with the light of thy countenance; from the pride of man, which would discountenance, or trample them under foot: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues; whatever abuse,*

rancour, or disputings of men of perverse minds may be levelled against them, it shall neither disturb nor distress them. *Note;* (1.) They are well kept whom God keeps. (2.) It may well reconcile us to all the evil that we meet with, when we enjoy a present sense of Divine favour, an experience of support from above, and a pleasing prospect of eternal rest, where we shall be for ever hid from the pride and revilings of men.

2. From his own experience he encourages others to love and trust the blessed God. His saints should love him; and with good reason they should do so, when his love to them has been so passing strange, and his dealings with them so amazingly kind; for he preserveth the faithful from sin, from falling, from their enemies, and will preserve them to his everlasting kingdom; and, therefore, how strongly are they bound to love him! and plentifully rewarded the proud doer; gives them the just punishment of their iniquities; and therefore he exhorts God's people, in the view of his constant care and righteous judgment, to be of good courage; whatever dark providences overtake you, or temptations beset you, or enemies oppress you, faint not, for God is with you, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord; while you hope, he will help: yea, he will give you hope as well as help. *Note;* (1.) The people of God should communicate their experience for mutual comfort and edification. (2.) How greatly do we need to be stirred up to love this blessed God? Who need not complain of the coldness of his heart, and the unfruitfulness of his affections, when he considers but a moment the wonders of redeeming grace? *Trust then, my soul, in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*

P S A L. XXXII.

Title. מַשְׁכִּיל *Maschil*] It is thought that David in this psalm, being awakened to a fresh sense of his sin in the affair of Uriah by his son Abalom's rebellion, expresses his deep repentance for having thus heinously offended God; and therefore it is called in the Hebrew, "לְדָוִד מַשְׁכִּיל" *ledavid maschil*, The Maschil of David; i. e. David's instruction; and in the LXX, "David's σοφειαι," or his return to a right understanding of himself. Psalms with this title are generally of a moral nature, and designed to dispose the mind to attention and reflection. The Arabic title asserts, that David spoke this prophetically of the redemption of mankind; and the Syriac informs us, that it treats of the sin and fall of Adam, and contains a prophecy of Christ, by whom we are delivered from hell. And St. Paul gives great support to this assertion by his quotation, Rom. iv. 8. Though composed upon a particular occasion, the psalm was afterwards adapted to public use by the Jewish church, and was solemnly repeated on the great day of expiation, when the whole nation made a general confession of their sins.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6 For this shall every one that is godly pray

unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7 Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

Ver. 1. Whose sin is covered] Namely, by God, and not by man; who ought to confess and not to hide it. See *ver. 5. Covered* from the wrath of God; who will not, upon man's repentance, and unfeigned belief in the great Mediator take any cognizance of it. This seems to be a metaphor, taken from writers who obliterate what is faulty. *In whose spirit there is no guile*, in the next verse, or *prevarication*, means, "whose sorrow for sin is sincere, and deeply affects his mind."

Ver. 3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old] Because I kept silence, my bones were consumed. Mudge and Houb. See Prov. xvii. 22.

Ver. 4. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer] Some have inferred, says Dr. Delaney, from *ver. 3*, &c. that David continued some time impenitent after the affair with Bathsheba: but had he been long impenitent, it would have been impossible for him to say, *mine iniquity have I not hid*; however, he most beautifully and feelingly describes the distressed condition that he was in before his pardon was pronounced; his mind upon the rack; his body disordered and wasted with grief. But, in consequence of his pardon, *his moisture was turned into the dryness of summer*. So it should be translated. The change was as if he had been removed at once from the depth of winter into midsummer; as if all the storms and rains and clouds of that gloomy season, the finest emblems of grief, were changed at once into serenity and sunshine; all heaven clear, unclouded, and smiling upon him. This interpretation of the doctor's might be admitted upon the idea of the summers here in our climate; but we must consider that David wrote in one which was very different; and the drought of which he speaks is very common in the eastern countries. Rain indiscriminately in the winter months, and not at all in the summer, is what is most common in the east. So it is at Aleppo, and about Algiers; and the summers in Judea are usually perfectly dry. It is therefore, doubtless, to the withered appearance of an eastern summer in common, that the Psalmist refers. See the *Observations*, p. 4. 13. where an account of a Syrian summer is given from Dr. Russel, which supplies us with a most beautiful comment on this passage. He says, that "from the end of May, if not sooner, not so much as one refreshing shower falls, and scarce a friendly cloud appears

"to shelter from the excessive heat of the sun till about the middle of September; that the verdure of the spring fades before the middle of May, and before the end of that month the whole country puts on so parched and barren an aspect, that one would scarce think it capable of producing any thing, there being but very few plants which have vigour enough to resist the extreme heat." In defence of this latter interpretation, a writer has urged the mechanism of the psalm; for, says he, this is one of those compositions which, according to the genius of the Hebrew poetry, express the same sense twice over in almost every verse. But, if we take the new interpretation of it above given, the latter part of the verse will have no connection at all with the former; nay, will be directly contrary to, and inconsistent with it. And to say no more, all the old versions and the best commentators do agree in the sense which we have given above.

Ver. 6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee] For this, namely, because thou art merciful, shall every one that is godly, truly penitent, and sincerely resolved for the future to serve thee, pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found; while there is room for repentance and reconciliation with thee. See Isai. lv. 6. The Chaldee renders it, *in an acceptable time*; the Arabic, *in a time of hearing*. There is considerable difficulty in the next clause. By the *floods of great waters*, some understanding dangers and distresses; agreeably to which the meaning is, that in the greatest difficulties and distresses, which may surround him like a deluge of water, they (those waters or distresses) shall not come nigh him, so as to swallow him up; but he shall in the end be delivered from them. Dr. Hammond, however, observes, that the words may be otherwise rendered, *But as for the inundation of many, or great waters*, (hereby signifying the wicked man, who, like a torrent, breaks over the bank, transgresses the laws, and sweeps and carries away all before him) they will not come nigh, or at all approach unto him; God, that is. They run on obstinate in their course; they care not for, nor ever look after God. Thus the opposition in the former and latter part of the verse seems to be exact; nor is the change of person from thee to him any objection, that being frequent in this poetic writing. See Ps. xviii.

Ver. 8. I will guide thee with mine eye] Let me counsel thee

10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

thee with mine eye towards thee: Mudge: who observes, that the author undertakes to instruct whoever he be that hears him, and to give him a hint of advice (for that is *counselling with the eye*); namely, to do as he had done; honestly to confess his sins when they have been committed: for the wicked man, the man of no principles, who gives a loose to crimes without repentance or confession, is never easy, and always feels himself *galled*; whereas the righteous man, who *puts his trust in God*, and submits himself to his government, shall always find himself encompassed with favour, ver. 10. The 9th verse should be read in a parenthesis. It is advising to take a good hint, and not *be like the horse or mule*, who understand no reason but the force of the bridle, and therefore will not come near one upon speaking to, or looking at them. Houbigant renders the last clause, very properly, *Or they will not come near thee*; for as they are not dangerous beasts, the word *lest* is extremely improper.

Ver. 11. *Be glad in the Lord*] Bishop Hare supposes that this verse belongs to the next psalm, because it has no connection with the foregoing verse, or any part of this psalm: but if placed at the beginning of the next, the two first verses agree very well together, and correspond with great propriety. As a further support of this conjecture, it may be observed, that almost throughout that psalm the verses are exegetical, containing the same or a similar sense; whence it is likewise probable, that this psalm was performed in parts by two divisions of the choir. See Bishop Hare and Mudge.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have here,

1. A declaration of the rich grace of God, made to returning sinners in Christ, and the blessedness thence accruing. Their *transgression is forgiven*, be it never so great, never so aggravated, never so long persisted in; their *sin is covered*; the blood of Jesus blots out the dread account; *their iniquity is not imputed*, no charge lieth against them, because *he who knew no sin*, was purely spotless in himself, *hath become sin for them*, and has borne all the wrath, which was the wages of sin, *that they might be made the righteousness of God in him*; might be, as considered in him, treated as righteous persons, who never had offended: these are blessed; no terrors of conscience dismay them, no fear of death need trouble them, nor any dread of judgment distress them; for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Such is their privilege, and their practice is answerable thereto: *in their spirit there is no guile*; the same grace which justifies the guilty sanctifies the unholy: they are blessed with simplicity of heart before God, and yield themselves up to the guidance of his word and Spirit.

2. He describes his miserable state, while sin reigned in him and over him; God's hand was heavy upon him in some violent disease, which parched up his body as the drought in summer; and the anguish made *his very bones wax old*, he appeared so emaciated thereby. Note; (1.)

Miserable is the state of the impenitent sinner. (2.) However severe the scourge which drives us to God, we have abundant reason to kiss the rod.

3. At length his silence broke, and he spoke with his tongue in penitent confession; with deep and unfeigned humiliation laying bare his bosom before the heart-searching God, and desiring to hide none of his transgressions. Note; (1.) It is a blessed symptom when the sinner is brought to his knees. (2.) They who are truly awakened by God's Spirit, desire to take shame to themselves; not palliating their offences, but in their aggravated guilt acknowledging and lamenting them.

4. While he was speaking God, heard and pardoned. *I said I will confess, &c. and* (possibly ere the purpose was formed into a prayer) *thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*, sealed the pardon to my conscience. Note; (1.) All who come to God in Christ, will find him readier to pardon than we to pray; what an encouragement to the chief of sinners! (2.) It is not our penitence, or our prayers, but God's free grace, to which alone we are indebted.

2dly, They who have a pardoning God cannot but rejoice in hope.

1. David professes his confidence in God, and his expectations from him. *Thou, the bleeding lamb of God*, whose wounds are open for me, *thou art my hiding-place*, whither my poor and sinful soul hath fled, and where it lies secure from all the accusations of conscience, the charges of Satan, and the fears of wrath: there no trouble can approach, but songs of deliverance compass me about, for guilt pardoned, for corruption subdued, for heaven opened. Note; They who have fled to Jesus for refuge have found matter for eternal praise.

2. By sweet experience he can now teach others the way to rest and peace, and pardon and joy unspeakable. *I will instruct thee, &c.* will point the path that I myself have trod; and in which whoever walks will find the same blessedness. Note; (1.) They who speak from experience will preach most effectually. (2.) A teachable spirit is the way to true wisdom. (3.) God's word and ministers, under the blessing of the Spirit, are our appointed guides, and we must hear them.

3. He warns the obstinate and incorrigible of their approaching misery, and cautions them to avoid it. They must not, like brute beasts, be slaves to their appetites, nor refractory against the divine word and warnings; for then their sorrows would be multiplied, and their torments insupportable and endless.

4. He encourages the faithful to adhere to God, and rejoice in him: while they trust in God, his mercy shall compass, his power guard them. Therefore, *be glad and rejoice, ye righteous*; glory in your privileges, and *shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart*; ascribe the praise to him to whom you are indebted for all the grace bestowed upon you; and look forward, with holy transport, to the kingdom that he hath provided for you. Amen! Amen.

P S A L. XXXIII.

God is to be praised for his goodness, for his power, and for his providence. Confidence is to be placed in God.

A Psalm of David.

REJOICE in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.

3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

4 For the word of the LORD is right, and all his works are done in truth.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgement; the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

13 The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

16 There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

17 An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

P S A L. XXXIII.

Title] This is said to be a psalm of David; but the particular occasion of its composition is not known: It seems probable, however, that it was composed by David in commemoration of the great deliverance of their forefathers, when God overthrew the chariots and the horses of the Egyptian king in the sea, and afterwards fed his people in the wilderness. See verses 7, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18. Be this, however, as it may, without any reference to an immediate subject, it is an excellent hymn on the power and providence of God.

Ver. 2. The psaltery, &c.] The psaltery of ten strings.

Ver. 7. He gathereth the waters, &c.] Though this may allude to the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, when the waters were as a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left; yet Mr. Lowth's Observation upon Jeremiah v. 22. may very properly be applied here. The keeping of the waters within bounds, so that they cannot overflow the earth, is often mentioned in Scripture as an immediate effect of God's over-ruling power and providence. Job, xxxviii. 10, 11. Pf. civ. 9. Prov. viii. 29. For water being specifically lighter than earth, by the common laws of gravitation it should rise above and overflow it; and then the adjusting the proportion of the tides, so that they rise no higher to the prejudice of the lower grounds, is another remarkable instance of God's special

providence. The last clause may be rendered, *He layeth them up in the storehouses of the deep.*

Ver. 9. And it stood fast] The word וַיִּשְׁתָּבֵט *vaiiangamad* in the Hebrew should be rendered, and it stood up; i. e. at God's command: or, more suitably to the subject spoken of, it arose into being. The verb אָמַד *amad* may likewise be rendered, it stood firm. See Green, and Lowth's Prelections, p. 45. 4to.

Ver. 15. He fashioneth their hearts alike] He formed their hearts, one and all, and consequently must know what are their thoughts and intentions. Mudge.

Ver. 17. An horse is a vain thing, &c.] The expression is the same in this and the preceding verse; and therefore the meaning must be the same. After having particularized the stout man and the horse; that is to say, the infantry and cavalry, the strength and the swiftness of an army; and said, that neither of them could save a king; he repeats again what he had said before in general, that no number of forces could do it; pointing out in the next verses, wherein is the true defence, and the only sure dependance of man.

Ver. 19. To keep them alive in famine] This verse is plain enough, if the psalm refers, as was hinted at the beginning, to the case of the Israelites in the wilderness; but if to any particular victory of David's, it seems to import that he and his people had been in great want of provisions, occasioned, perhaps, by that stratagem of the enemy's

20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield.

21 For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

P S A L. XXXIV.

David praiseth God, and exhorteth others thereto by his experience. They are blessed that trust in God. He exhorteth to the fear of God. The privileges of the righteous.

A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

I Will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

enemy's conduct, which God is said above to have defeated; and that possibly might be one reason, why here, particularly, numbers were of no service.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, They who know the happiness of praising God with joyful lips will be provoking others to the same blessed work.

1. The Psalmist calls upon the righteous to join him in the grateful song of praise. It is comely work, most justly due to God, most becoming a soul so deeply bound in gratitude and love. Renewed mercies call for new songs. *Note*; Praise is a noble part of worship, in which the heart, affected with the sense of God's love, will be frequently engaged.

2. He suggests abundant matter for our praise. [1.] *For God's pure and perfect word*, which, next to the gifts of his Son and Spirit, may be well reckoned our chief blessing, where the paths of truth and holiness are marked out, and the way to glory made plain before our faces. [2.] *For his providential dispensations*, which are righteousness and judgment; all God's dealings with the sons of men, and, above all, his goodness, are seen throughout the earth; goodness to all, giving them life, and breath, and all things, and peculiar goodness to his believing people, who share the richer mercies of gospel grace. [3.] *For the creation*, rising at the word of Almighty power, and instantly starting into being at the command of God, *by the word of the Lord*, the Logos, his Son, the great agent, *by whom all things were made*, and *by the breath of his mouth*, the powerful operations of his holy Spirit. The heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that dwell therein, hence derive their original, and, by the same omnipotence preserved, continue steadfast and unchangeable; till, by a second mighty word, *the heavens shall be wrapped together as a scroll, the earth dissolve, and all the elements melt with fervent heat*. [4.] *For his disappointing the devices of the wicked*, however craftily laid or deeply hidden. [5.] *For his designs of grace and love* toward his faithful people. *Note*; These are not the subjects of praise to any one saint merely, but to every righteous man in every age.

3. He infers from all these views of God's word, works, and providence, the universal obligation to reverence and fear Him who, having all the creatures in his hand, can quickly arm them for our ruin; and therefore highly is it our interest, as well as duty, to pay him our bounden service, and not provoke his indignation.

2dly, We have,

1. The blessedness of God's believing people. Their God beholds all the sons of men; their thoughts are naked and open before him. Though some wickedly say, 'God hath forsaken the earth,' his eyes go to and fro in it,

and none of the devices of the ungodly are unknown or unnoticed by him. *He fashioneth their hearts*: as the God of the spirits of all flesh, he must needs be acquainted with the work of his own hands; and he over-rules all the imaginations that they entertain, directing them all in such a way as to be subservient to the purposes of his own glory; *and considereth all their works*; the deeds of the wicked, to reserve them for judgment; and of the righteous to reward them. Nor can any creature act independently of him, either to save or to destroy: in which consideration, the people of God may take the greatest satisfaction. The greatest kings, with the most numerous hosts, avail nothing if God prosper them not: the strength of a giant is weakness if God be against him, as David had experienced: and all the horses prepared for battle cannot protect or save their riders if the Lord be not on their side: so that, while all creature-dependence must be renounced by us, all creature-opposition need not be feared, if the Lord be our God. And his eyes are upon them that fear him; whilst in general he regards and governs all the rest, with peculiar favour he looks upon his faithful children, whose trust is placed on his rich mercy in Christ; and whose fear is, lest they offend him. Against these, though kings and armies, and mighty men and horses of war, rise up, they cannot hurt or destroy them: *God will deliver their soul from death*, from temporal death, from spiritual death, from eternal death. In time of public calamity, when famine stalks through the land, they shall have bread to eat; and when the famine of the word prevails, and they are deprived of the ministry of the word and ordinances, they shall be fed with secret supplies of grace, and their souls shall live. *Note*; (1.) They are truly blessed and happy who are God's people, whom he regards with love, and who regard him with confidence and reverential filial fear. (2.) Whatever thoughts are in a man's heart,—the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. (3.) The thought of the universal power, influence, and operations of God, should ever engage our quiet and contented resignation of ourselves into his hands.

2. Having described the blessedness of the people of God, he directs them in their duty. *Our soul waiteth for the Lord*, in patient hope, expecting the fulfilment of his promises. *He is our help and our shield*, the strength on which we depend, and the protection under which we are safe. *For our heart shall rejoice in him*; as we are bound to do under the rich experience of his grace and love, and in hope of the glory which shall be revealed in us, *because we have trusted in his holy name*, which trust itself originates in his grace and the operations of his ever-blessed Spirit. Therefore, *let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us*, as we are ever called to pray; for in this way we must expect those gracious

2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad.

3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.

4 I fought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

8 O taste and see that the LORD *is* good; blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him.

9 O fear the LORD, ye his faints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him.

gracious supplies which he has promised; according as we hope in thee, renouncing every other hope, and expecting by faith and prayer to be made partakers of thy present mercy in every time of need, and of thy eternal mercy when all our requests shall be finally and fully accomplished.

P S A L. XXXIV.

Title. ויגרשבו ויגרשבו. *Who drove him away*] *Who dismissed him*, according to the Vulgate, LXX, Arabic, &c. It is very probable, that *Abimelech* was a name of dignity given to all the kings of Gath, as *Pharaoh* and *Cesar* were to the Egyptian and Roman kings. See the notes on 1 Sam. xxi. Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that David wrote this psalm for the use and instruction of those men who resorted to him at Adullam, after his departure from Gath. The psalm (says he) contains the noblest encouragements to piety and virtue, from an assurance that all such as are so devoted are the immediate care of Almighty God; as all those of a contrary character are his abhorrence, and the sure marks of his vengeance. The psalm, considered in this light, is certainly one of the noblest, the best turned, best judged, and best adapted compositions, that ever was penned. David begins by encouraging them to piety and gratitude to God from his own example, ver. 1 - 7. He then exhorts others to make trial of the same mercies; to learn the goodness of God from their own experience, ver. 8, 9. He then assures them, that strength and magnanimity are no securities from want and distress; whereas trust and confidence in God are a never-failing source of every thing that is good, ver. 10. After which he sums up all in a most pathetic and beautiful exhortation to piety and virtue, and to confidence in God; in full assurance, that, as he was the guardian and true protector of virtue in distress, so was he the unerring observer and steady avenger of wickedness. See Life of David, b. i. c. 12.

Ver. 3. Magnify the Lord with me] These, and the like expressions, do not mean that we can add any thing to the glory of the name or nature of God; but that we should shew forth and publicly celebrate his majesty and greatness, when we experience the interpositions of his providence in our deliverance from any threatening evil. We should then, with the Psalmist, *glory in God*; i. e. ascribe our safety, not to our own contrivance, subtilty, or power, but to the assistance and care of God, who watches over us. Chandler.

Ver. 4. And delivered me from all my fears] This exactly answers to the history; which informs us, that

when David heard what the servants of Achish said to their master concerning him, *He laid up those words in his heart, and was greatly afraid*, 1 Sam. xxi. 13. Undoubtedly, he thought himself in extreme danger; but, instead of removing their suspicions, and his own fears, by offering to join with the Philistines against his country, he rather chose to counterfeit madness, and trust Providence with the success of it, than secure his safety by base and dishonourable compliances. Chandler.

Ver. 5. And were lightened] The original verb נהר *nabar* signifies, properly, to *flow down* or *flow around*, and is used of the flow of rivers, and with equal propriety applied to the flow of light. Accordingly, in the Chaldee and Arabic languages, it has the signification of light and splendor, and unquestionably it had the same originally in the Hebrew. See Job, iii. 4. The meaning of the word in the passage before us is, that the humble looked unto God for the Psalmist's protection, and received that *light*; i. e. that comfort and joy from him upon David's return in safety, which diffused itself throughout their whole hearts; so that *their faces were not ashamed*, or, as the word צפח *chaphar* signifies, "not put to the blush for shame," by being disappointed as to their hope on his account. Chandler. It may be proper just to observe, that this is another of the alphabetical psalms; but that this 5th verse includes two letters, and yet is no longer than the rest, which have only one of these initial letters. This verse is translated by many, *Approach, or look unto the Lord, and be enlightened; and your faces shall not be ashamed*. See the versions, and Houbigant. Fenwick renders it,

Who look to him, have always comfort found;
None e'er do that, and go away ashamed.

Ver. 6, 7. This poor man cried] This seems to be the triumph of David's afflicted friends for his safe return, says Chandler. "This distressed man cried and sought the help of God, when he was in the greatest straits at Gath, as being in danger of destruction if he stayed there, and yet not knowing how to escape: but God heard his cry, and delivered him out of them all." The angel of the Lord, in the next verse, does not mean a single angel; but a commanding angel, ordering his forces to encamp round about those whom God commissions him to preserve in safety. Dr. Delaney supposes these two verses to allude to Jacob, who was at Mahanaim protected by two armies of angels; or perhaps, more particularly, to the many distresses from which the Psalmist himself was delivered by the gracious interposition of God.

Ver.

10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good *thing*.

11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

12 What man *is he that* desireth life, and loveth *many* days, that he may see good?

13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their cry.

16 The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 *The righteous* cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

18 The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

22 The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

Ver. 10. The young lions do lack] All the ancient versions, except the Chaldee, read *great, powerful men, instead of young lions*; and Houbigant renders the place, *rich men are become poor and hungry; but they who seek the Lord, &c.* This sense is undoubtedly good: but I see nothing to object against our own reading; for the meaning is, that if God takes care of the beasts of the field, much more will he take care of them that fear him; and much sooner suffer those to die for want of their prey, than these to perish through the want of necessaries or the failure of his protection. The original word כַּפִּירִים *kaphirim*, signifies rather *lions of prey*, than *young lions*. See Chandler and Schultens on Prov. xix. 12.

Ver. 12. And loveth many days, that he may see good] *And loveth days to see or enjoy good.* Houbigant. The meaning of the verse is, "Who is the man that desires a long and "happy life?"

Ver. 15. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous] i. e. He beholds them with approbation, and is constantly watchful over them to protect and supply them; and, on the other hand, *the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*, as he views them with displeasure, and marks them out for vengeance. Mr. Mudge reads the 16th verse in a parenthesis, as coming in only by the bye; for the general subject relates to good men, and the 17th verse is connected to the 15th. *His eyes are open to their cry;—They cry, &c.*

Ver. 18. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart] God is near to all men: for in him they all live: but he is near to the broken in heart in a peculiar sense, as he is ever ready and always able to help them; as men are much more capable of assisting those whom they value when present with, than when absent from them; from which the form of speech, as applied to God, is taken. Chandler.

Ver. 20. He keepeth all his bones, &c.] These words were peculiarly accomplished in Christ, whose bones were

not broken on the cross, according to the usual custom of treating those who were crucified, to put them the sooner out of their pain. But the expression here may be figurative, and mean deliverance from all grievous, distressing, and deadly affliction. This is what good men may generally expect from God. The 21st verse seems fully to explain this.

Ver. 21. Evil shall slay the wicked] The consequences of men's crimes are often fatal to them; they shall destroy the wicked; but the righteous, though he has many sufferings, yet shall he be delivered out of them, ver. 19. and not like the wicked come to utter destruction.

Ver. 22. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants] This is a detached sentence, added, as in Ps. xxv. beyond the alphabet; perhaps that the same may sound well, in ending with a promise rather than a threat: the latter Jews, for the same reason, repeat a verse at the end of some books in the Old Testament. *Shall be desolate*, may be rendered, *shall be guilty*; which is the proper meaning of the original word אַשְׁמֵם *ieshemu*. They are guilty, and liable to punishment. The word is frequently rendered thus in our version (see Lev. iv. 13. 22.), and generally includes in it the idea of guilt, and the punishment incurred by it. Chandler; who observes, that this psalm is well adapted to the occasion on which it was penned. David was in a very dangerous situation at Gath, and seems to have been apprehensive that the Philistines would have treated him as an enemy and a spy. He was himself *greatly afraid*, ver. 4. His friends were in pain for him when they heard of his situation, and earnestly looked to God, that, as he had promised him the crown, he would protect and restore him to his country in safety: ver. 5. There is something very striking and pleasing in the sudden transitions, and the change of persons which is observable in these few verses. *My soul shall boast—The humble shall hear—I fought the Lord—*

L

This

P S A L. XXXV.

David prayeth for his own safety, and his enemies' confusion: he complaineth of their wrongful dealing, whereby God is incited against them.

A Psalm of David.

PLEAD *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.

2 Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.

3 Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way* against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I *am* thy salvation.

4 Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be

turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

5 Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase *them*.

6 Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

7 For without cause have they hid for me their net *in* a pit, *which* without cause they have digged for my soul.

8 Let destruction come upon him at un-awares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.

9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say, LORD, who *is*

This poor man cried, &c. There is a force and elegance in the very unconnection of the expressions which, had they been more closely tied by the proper particles, would have been in a great measure lost. Things thus separated from each other, and yet accelerated, discover, as Longinus observes, the earnestness and vehemency of the inward working of the mind; and, though it may seem to interrupt or disturb the sentence, yet quickens and enforces it. *De Sublim. cap. xix.*

REFLECTIONS.—1. He professes his fixed purpose, at all times, and in all places, to be shewing forth God's praise; both as the grateful tribute which he owed, and that other humble men in distress might hear and be glad, encouraged by *his* mercies to hope for help and deliverance. *In the Lord he will boast*, ascribing all to him, and counting his interest in his favour the greatest and most invaluable acquisition.

2. He labours to excite others to join him in the work of praise, *exalting and magnifying* God's holy name. And good reason was there for so doing: great was his distress, an exile in an enemy's country; his life in danger; but he could be in no place where a throne of grace was not open: thither he flies, tells his compassionate Lord of all his fears, and is heard and holpen. Nor was his case singular; multitudes, like himself, had prayed, and were lightened, their darkness of soul dispelled, and their distressful circumstances cleared up: nor did ever God refuse the meanest, who thus were found waiting upon him. Angelic hosts disdain not the employment of ministering to the heirs of salvation; but, happy in obedience to their Lord's commands, encamp around them. Thus God delivers his believing people from every danger, and they are bound to bless and praise him.

3. He invites all to *taste and see that the Lord is good*, to come and partake of the riches of his mercy in Christ, so freely offered, and so richly bestowed on the sinful sons of men. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in him*, accepts the gracious invitation, and rests on his merciful goodness for pardon, grace, and glory.

4. He exhorts his faints to fear him for his goodness' sake, engaged thereby to more dutiful submission and service; and surely their interest is highly concerned in so doing, *for there is no want to them that fear him*. As much of this world's good as is advantageous for them shall be given them; but especially the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, in all their rich abundance, shall be their happy portion. *Thus, though the lions hunger* through the scarcity of prey; or the covetous and ravenous oppressor is reduced to want, God's faithful people shall be fed to the full, their soul and body both replenished, and nothing be wanting to make them truly and abidingly happy.

P S A L. XXXV.

Title. לָדָוִד *ledavid.*] This Psalm is thought to have been composed by David when he was persecuted by Saul; whose forces, which were unjustly raised against him, he beseeches God to dissipate, and especially to stop the mouths of his false accusers; such as Doeg and the Ziphites, of whom he complains bitterly. Many commentators suppose, that David is here speaking in the person of Christ; and, consequently, that the enemies here referred to, are more especially the rulers of the darkness of this world, whose destruction is prophetically foretold.

Ver. 1. Plead my cause, &c.] Contend, O Lord, with them who contend with me.

Ver. 4. Let them be confounded, &c.] They shall blush and be ashamed—They shall be turned back, &c. We should render in the future all the following verses; which our translation puts in the optative mood, and consequently gives them too much the appearance of an imprecatory and revengeful spirit. See the note on Ps. v. 10.

Ver. 5. And let the angel of the Lord chase them] And an angel of the Lord driving: i. e. a very violent wind. He maketh his angels wind, &c. Mudge.

Ver. 7. Which without cause, &c.] Without provocation he hath digged a pit for my life. Saul seems to be pointed at in this clause, by the change of the plural number into the singular. Compare 1 Sam. xviii. 10, 11. 21. and xix. 10.

like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him ?

11 False witnesses did rise up ; they laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.

12 They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth : I humbled my soul with fasting ; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

14 I behaved myself as though *he had been* my friend or brother : I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.

15 But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together : *yea*, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew *it* not ; they did tear *me*, and ceased not :

16 With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

17 LORD, how long wilt thou look on ? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation : I will praise thee among much people.

19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me : *neither* let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

20 For they speak not peace : but they devise deceitful matters against *them, that are* quiet in the land.

21 Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, *and* said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen *it*.

22 *This* thou hast seen, O LORD : keep not silence : O LORD, be not far from me.

23 Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, *even* unto my cause, my God, and my Lord.

Ver. 10. All my bones shall say] These are figuratively represented as praising God ; as if he had said, " All the members of my body, as well as all the faculties of my soul, shall be affected with a deep sense of thy goodness towards me, and thereby set forth thy praise."

Ver. 11. False witnesses did rise up, &c.] False witnesses will arise ; so the Hebrew speaks in the future ; and the verbs in the two next periods are also future ; to intimate that the prophet was speaking of what was then future, in the person of *him* against whom *false witnesses did arise* ; and who, because our souls *were sick*, clothed himself with the *sackcloth* of our flesh ; *mourning* at the very thought that *his prayers*, in any measure, *should return into his own bosom*. See Fenwick, and 1 Sam. xxiv. 9., and Matt. xxvi. 59, 60.

Ver. 12. To the spoiling of my soul] *And attempt to rob me of my life*. Green. The Hebrew שִׁכְוֹל *shokol*, is *abortion, or bereavement to my soul* : " That I may be bereft of my soul, as a woman of an abortive child." Mudge and Houbigant.

Ver. 13. And my prayer returned into mine own bosom] *And my prayer rested, or settled in my bosom ;* i. e. " I was never without a prayer for them in my breast ;" for it would be odd, says Mudge, to talk of prayers *returning*, without having mentioned any prayer at all.

Ver. 14. As one that mourneth, &c.] As a mourning mother.

Ver. 15, 16. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, &c.] But in my halting they rejoiced, and gathered together ; they gathered about me, crouching, when I did not know it ; they rent me without ceasing : ver. 16. *Amidst profligate common buffoons, they grinned upon me with their teeth.* These two verses express in the strongest images the insult of his

enemies. When he *halted*, from weakness, they gathered about him, and mocked him with a mimic *halting* ; for נְכִים *nekim*, properly signifies people *weak* in their legs, and consequently *limping* and *crouching* : they would come behind him and rend his garment ; for קָרַעוּ *karu*, I think, never signifies any thing else. They would grin their teeth at him, amidst the loosest, most abandoned, profligate buffoons by profession ; for there is not a worse word than חַנְפֵי *chanpei*. See Mudge. The indignities and outrages which our Blessed Saviour endured from the Jews seem to be plainly foretold here. Compare Mark, xiv. 65. where Jesus, being blindfolded, suffered a variety of indignities ; but *could not know* who the wretched mockers and buffoons were, otherwise than by his divine power.

Ver. 17. My darling] *My solitary one*. See Pf. xxii. 20.

Ver. 19. Wink with the eye] i. e. In derision of my misfortunes.

REFLECTIONS.—The cause of God and truth has hitherto been here more or less under the cross. We have,

1. David calling upon God to plead his cause, and vindicate his injured innocence. His enemies maligned and traduced him ; not satisfied with plundering him of all, and driving him out as a vagabond in the earth, they thirsted for his precious blood. *Note*, (1.) The best of men have been often persecuted as the vilest criminals ; and the most inoffensive and peaceable in the land, charged with the blackest designs of conspiracy and rebellion. (2.) When we have a good cause and a good conscience, it should make us the more easily put up with the revilings of men. (3.) God will one day visit for

24 Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.

25 Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.

26 Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify *themselves* against me.

27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

28 And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.

oppression and wrong; till then, let us possess our souls in patience.

2. He prays that God would inwardly support him, and outwardly manifest his power to the confusion of his enemies. [1.] He begs inward support, *say unto my soul, I am thy salvation*: all other trials would sit light upon him, while he possessed this consciousness of God's power and grace engaged for him. *Note*; When the conscience of the believer assures him of his part in the Almighty Saviour, then all is peace within, and he can defy the glittering sword without. [2.] He cries for God's appearing to protect him, and confound his enemies; not in the language of revenge, but under the spirit of prophecy, as what would surely come to pass. God's shield and buckler spread over him, and sword and spear lifted up against his persecutors, will not only save *him*, but confound *them*. *Note*; (1.) Though we may not indulge private resentment, nor wish evil to our worst enemies, we may safely pray for the deliverance of God's suffering people, and the confusion of the enemies of Christ and his church. (2.) The sinner's foot is in a slippery place, and through the darkness of his fallen mind he sees not the dreadful pit just before him.

3. He rejoices in the confidence that God would save him, and therefore ascribes to him the glory. *All my bones, my soul and body, my whole man, shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?* so peerless in thy own excellencies, so condescending to thy poor people, so good to redeem, so great to deliver them from all their mighty adversaries. *Note*; (1.) They who make the Lord their strength, will find him their joy. (2.) If God be for us, no matter who are against us.

P S A L. XXXVI.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ *lamnatseach.*] This Psalm is supposed to have been written by David at the beginning of Saul's per-

P S A L. XXXVI.

The grievous estate of the wicked. The excellency of God's mercy. David prayeth for favour to God's children.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord.

THE transgression of the wicked faith within my heart, *that 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 hath left off to be wise, and to do good.

4 He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *that is not good*; he abhorreth not evil.

5 Thy mercy, O LORD, *is in the heavens*; and thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds.

6 Thy righteousness *is like the great moun-*

secution; whilst he outwardly professed kindness towards him, but yet he could not help discovering that he desired and intended his ruin. David here opposes the faithfulness and goodness of God, to the malice and treachery of Saul; though without mentioning him by name: and, as Theodoret well observes, David's delicacy in this respect is very remarkable; for, although the chief of his most bitter complaints were levelled against Saul, yet throughout his Psalms, he never once mentions him by name. This Psalm, Mudge observes, has three states: the first, in which the author describes the treacherous and false contrivances of wicked men; the second is the address of the good man to God; in which he acknowledges all those attributes, that are the support of righteous men, to be infinite and boundless; and from thence draws his assurance of being supported. The last, as the consequence of this, represents the downfall of the wicked.

Ver. 1. The transgression of the wicked faith, &c.] The wicked man hath an oracle of rebellion within his heart. "The wicked man has no regard to the oracles of God: he has one of his own heart, which dictates nothing but rebellion." Mudge.

Ver. 2. For he flattereth, &c.] Though he smootheth it over to himself in his own eyes, his iniquity must be found out, and issue in hatred. Mudge.

Ver. 5. Thy mercy, O Lord, &c.] As much as to say, "This is my comfort still, that thy loving-kindness and faithfulness are infinitely greater than the hatred and falsehood of Saul."

Ver. 6. Thou preservest man and beast.] This seems at first sight to come in somewhat abruptly; but the Psalmist's meaning was to express his sure dependence upon God, whose providence, as it extended over the beasts of the earth, would therefore much more certainly take care of him.

Ver.

tains: thy judgments *are* a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

7 How excellent *is* thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

9 For with thee *is* the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

10 O continue thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

11 Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

12 There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

Ver. 7, 8, 9. How excellent, &c.] The expressions here, which denote the abundance of divine blessings upon the righteous man, seem to be taken from the temple, from whence they were to issue. Under the covert of the temple, the wings of the cherubim, he was to be sheltered. The richness of the sacrifices, the streams of oil, wine, odours, &c. and the light of the golden candlestick, are all plainly referred to. As to the *fountain of life*, ver. 9. possibly there might be a living spring within the precincts of the temple, from whence the brazen sea, &c. might be supplied. See Pl. xxxvi. 9. and Mudge; who reads the beginning of the 9th verse thus, *In thy temple is the fountain of life.* Others suppose that, *with thee is the fountain of life*, means, "Thou art the source not only of our temporal, but also of our spiritual and of our eternal life."

Ver. 11. Let not the foot of pride come against me] Let me not be trampled under the foot of pride, nor shaken in pieces by the arm of violence. There seems to be a particular beauty in this expression, by which David elegantly intimates the supercilious haughtiness and disdainful insolence of his enemy; who, if he had him in his power, would spurn him under foot, and trample on him.

Ver. 12. There are the workers of iniquity fallen] The original word **שָׁמָּה** *sham*, represents strongly before the eyes the sudden downfall of the wicked: "Upon the very spot where they practise their treachery, they receive their downfall." This is the proper force of **שָׁמָּה** *sham*, as **אֵז** *az*, denotes *the very instant*.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The highest title of the greatest monarch, or the wisest man, is, to be called the servant of the Lord; in this David glories, as his most distinguished honour. We find him here describing the wickedness of the wicked in its true colours, beginning with the root of bitterness within, and proceeding to the hateful fruits without.

1. The fear of God is banished from his eyes; this *the transgression of the wicked saith within my heart*. David, by observing and marking his conduct, could not but be so convinced; for they who daringly and avowedly continue in the breach of God's laws, must needs be destitute of his fear. *Note*; It is no charity to deny the evidence of our senses, and to hope well of those who live in open sin.

2. He cries, Peace, peace, to his soul, *he flattereth himself in his own eyes*, either that God regardeth it not, or will wink at what he calls the little escapes and infirmities

of human nature; that his judgments will not be so severe as his word seems to say; that death is at a distance; that if he must repent, it is time enough yet; and that, at least, he shall do as well as thousands of others, whom God will not be so hard as, for a little sin here, to destroy eternally.

2dly, The world affords a dark prospect to the child of God; he must look above him, not around him, if he would be comforted; and there a blessed scene presents itself in that glorious God, who is the joy of his people, and the portion of their inheritance.

1. He contemplates the bright perfections of the ever-blessed God: *Thy mercy is in the heavens*, laid up for thy faithful people, notwithstanding all the devices of the wicked against them; and as this is now their protection, shortly they will be brought to these heavens, eternally to enjoy it. To this it is owing also, that sinners are so long borne with. God is merciful, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. *Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds*: though men are false, God is faithful; and his believing people may confidently trust him to fulfil all his promises; nor need think it long that sinners are borne with; his threatenings will be accomplished in their season. *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains*, those decisions against the impenitent, which are fixed and immovable. *Thy judgments are a great deep*, unfathomable often by the shallow line of human understanding, but always directed with infinite wisdom and unimpeachable equity.

2. He meditates with delight on his dispensations of providence and grace towards his people, in all which his excellent loving-kindness appears. In general, all creatures partake of his providential care: not only man, the lord of the creation, but every beast is fed by his bounty, and preserved by his providence; while with especial regard he manifests his loving-kindness to those who put their trust under the shadow of his wings, and fills their hearts with wonder, gratitude, and love. With liberal hand their wants are all supplied; *with the fatness of his house they are satisfied*: an all-sufficient God is an all-sufficient portion. Of earthly blessings they shall have enough, while sweet content makes every meal a feast: with spiritual communications they shall be abundantly replenished; enjoying, in holy ordinances here below, divine fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; and daily looking for the perfection of happiness in the full, uninterrupted, and eternal enjoyment of God's presence and love in his temple of glory above. Even

P S A L. XXXVII.

David persuadeth to patience and confidence in God, by the different estate of the godly and the wicked.

A Psalm of David.

FRET not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

6 And he shall bring forth thy righteous-

ness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.

7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

9 For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

12 The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

in this vale of tears, thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures; those pure joys, which they who thirst after righteousness taste, when coming to Jesus to drink; they receive out of his fulness the abundance of pardon, grace, and consolations, the foretastes of those eternal pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. *For with thee is the fountain of life;* thou art the living fountain; thy breath first animated the lifeless clay; but better far, quickened by thy free spirit, our souls, dead in trespasses and sins, first felt new powers infused, and truly began to live. With living streams fed from the sacred fountain, we are enabled daily to increase with the increase of God, and shortly we expect to drink at the fountain-head, and live eternally glorious and happy, like the author of our blessed immortality. *In thy light shall we see light;* without thee all is darkness; no sun to shine, no eye to see; but when thou, the sun of righteousness, dost arise, then straight our sightless eye-balls meet the welcome day. Before us lies the path of life and glory, and distant realms of everlasting light terminate the prospect. Thither our willing feet are hastening; and, yet a moment, they shall arrive at that bright world, where, face to face, we shall behold the beatific and transforming vision, and in the contemplation of God's transcendent excellencies, be unutterably and eternally happy.

P S A L. XXXVII.

Title לודד ledavid.] This Psalm was made by David in his old age; and it is an excellent hymn on the equal providence of God, at that time exercised towards the Jews; see the note on Ps. i. 4. It contains an exhortation to good men to persevere in a religious course of life: and David assured them, that if they did so, they should see, as he himself had done, that the prosperity of the wicked should not last long; and that God would certainly reward those who with meekness and

patience would continue to trust in, and rely upon him. Dr. Delaney conjectures upon this Psalm, that when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, perceived, upon David's return after the rebellion of Absalom, that the king had conceived an ill opinion of him, through the false suggestions of his servant Ziba, (2 Sam. xvi. 1—4. xix. 24—30.) it is natural to suppose the generous and upright heart of Mephibosheth to be distressed, dejected, and uneasy to the last degree, and taking rash and repining resolutions to banish himself from a country where he had found such treacherous treatment, &c. And what could be more natural, and more consoling under these circumstances, than for the good king to entreat him to forego those rash resolutions; to admonish him, that if he bore his present low estate with patience and resignation to the divine will, he should soon see it bettered; to remind him that the prosperity of the wicked was short, &c. And in what words could all this have been conveyed more strongly, than in those of this Psalm? See Life of David, b. iv. c. 14, &c. It should be observed, that this Psalm is alphabetical at every other verse; or, more properly, they are made two verses, which should be but one long one; as Lam. i. 2.

Ver. 3. S shalt thou dwell, &c.] Some render it, *Dwell in the land, and feed upon faith.* Green renders it, *And be filled with its plenty.* The word is rendered, Neh. xi. 23. *A certain portion of provisions.* The LXX read here, *With its riches or abundance;* which is very suitable to the place.

Ver. 6. Bring forth thy righteousness as the light, &c.] i. e. "Perfectly clear up and vindicate thy integrity; which may for a time be obscured by calumnies and slanders, as the sun is by mists and clouds." *Judgment,* in the next clause, is only another word for righteousness or integrity.

Ver. 8. Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.] *It is only to his own prejudice.* Mudge. See Ps. xv. 4.

Ver.

13 The LORD shall laugh at him : for he seeth that his day is coming.

14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation.

15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken : but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.

18 The LORD knoweth the days of the upright : and their inheritance shall be for ever.

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time ; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 But the wicked shall perish, and the

enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the fat of lambs : they shall consume ; into smoke shall they consume away.

21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again : but the righteous sheweth mercy and giveth.

22 For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the earth ; and *they that be* cursed of him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD : and he delighteth in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down : for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand.

25 I have been young, and *now* am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

26 *He is* ever merciful, and lendeth ; and his seed *is* blessed.

Ver. 13: That his day is coming] i. e. The day of his punishment: so Jer. v. 31. *For thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee.* See Pf. cxxxviii. 7. Job, xviii. 20. Isai. ix. 4.

Ver. 14. The wicked have drawn out the sword, &c.] I cannot but think, says a writer on the Psalms, that these are figurative expressions ; and that David understood by these weapons, with which he has furnished the ungodly, their bitter and malicious invectives, their foul and false reproaches, &c. These were the arms, in the use of which, as he frequently complains, they were admirably well skilled. In short, this verse seems to be explained to this sense by Pf. lvii. 4. where, speaking of wicked men, it is said, *Worse teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword:* and, if so, then the next verse will mean, that their intention will be frustrated ; they shall not do the mischief that they intended ; *their bows shall be broken,* and their invectives and calumnies shall recoil, and do themselves hurt ; *their sharp sword,* their false and malicious tongues, *shall pierce through their own soul.* And that this was the Psalmist's meaning, who can doubt, after reading Pf. lxiv. 3. where the wicked doers are said to have *whet their tongue like a sword, and to shoot out their arrows, even bitter words?* By the way, this agrees well with the learned author's conjecture mentioned above.

Ver. 21, 22. The wicked borroweth, &c.] This description of the wicked and the righteous, is designed not to shew the *dispositions* of one and the other, as their *abilities.* "The wicked shall be so poor, as to be ever obliged to borrow, and incapable of paying ; while the righteous shall have wherewithal to be generous and munificent." This will continue on the sense of the three verses before, to those that follow, which otherwise will be wholly disjointed. "For they who are blessed of *him*, the Lord, (namely, the righteous, ver. 18, 19.) shall inherit the earth ; and they who are cursed of *him*, (namely, the

"wicked, ver. 20.) shall be cut off. *The steps of the man,* (ver. 23.) i. e. the righteous man, *are firmly fixed, &c.*" Mudge. Some render the 23d verse, *While the steps of a man are directed by the Lord, he shall accept his way.* The Hebrew word גֵּבֶר *geber*, rendered a man, is said by Glassius, Onomat. p. 74. to be used emphatically as a type of Christ. See also Dr. Thomas Jackson's Nazareth and Bethlehem, vol. ii. p. 401.

Ver. 25. I have been young, &c.] From the whole scope of this Psalm nothing can be plainer, than that it was intended by the author for a hymn on the equal providence of God ; which at that time he did not fail to exercise towards the Jews ; and an exhortation to those for whose use it was written, to depend and rely upon that ; and this verse is a particular proof of it. The only difficulty is, how to reconcile this general assertion of David's, with some complaints of his in other parts of his writings, where he seems to be much affected by the prosperity of the wicked. To obviate this difficulty, many learned men have thought, that though this verse runs in general terms, yet it is to be understood with some restriction, as many of the Proverbs are ; and that David did not mean to say, that the righteous *never* were forsaken, without exception ; but only that *in general* they were not ; and that the instances of the contrary were so very rare that they did not deserve consideration. Possibly it might be so ; but from the whole drift of this Psalm, I am rather inclined to think that the royal Psalmist intended we should understand him according to the letter. And his doctrine throughout his writings seems to have been this, "That though God might suffer the streams which conveyed his blessings to the righteous Jews, sometimes to be interrupted in their usual course, or to flow in different channels ; yet after those purposes were answered, which occasioned the alteration, "all things would come right again : " and, as he himself has

27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

31 The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

32 The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

33 The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

34 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land:

when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

35 I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree:

36 Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble.

40 And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

has summed it up, Pf. xxxiv. 19. *Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all.* Therefore he frequently exhorts them, not to fret and repine at the prosperity of the wicked, but to put their trust in God, to wait patiently, to abide and quietly expect the happy reverse of their present evil fortune: and the argument that he uses to enforce this all along is, because both the prosperity of the sinner, and the distress of the good man, should only be temporary and not last long. As to sinners, as Aaph observes, Pf. lxxiii. 18. their exaltation seemed only to be to make their fall more conspicuous, and God's dealing with them more remarkable. For though he lifeth them up, he setteth them in slippery places, then casteth them down, and destroyeth them. As to the good man, David seems to compare God's constant care of him to that of a fond parent over his child, holding him by the hand, and carefully leading him to prevent his fall. *Though he fall, he shall not be cast away, for the Lord upholdeth his hand, or leadeth him by the hand.* In this verse he assures them, that his experience had always confirmed the doctrine he had been teaching. And he afterwards speaks to the same purpose concerning the prosperous sinner's downfall; ver. 36, 37, where it is very probable that he had an eye to Saul. When David came first to Saul's camp, he found that wicked prince in great power, in which he continued flourishing for several years. Nothing was more unlikely than that such a raw shepherd's boy as David then was, should be exalted to the regal dignity in his room: and, considering his history in all its circumstances, this was as strong an instance of the divine providence as almost any which could be given.

Ver. 27. And dwell for evermore] *Dwell in the land for ever,* according to Bishop Hare; i. e. "Enjoy a long and "prosperous life in the land, with great tranquillity and "peace." In the second clause of the next verse, in

order to begin the period with an *y ain*, the Bishop reads *וְיָנִי* *anavim*, the humble; the humble are preserved for ever.

Ver. 33. Nor condemn him when he is judged] *Nor shall he [the wicked] condemn him when he is judged.* It seems more to the purpose to say, that God would not suffer the wicked man to condemn the righteous or find him guilty, (for that, probably, is the way in which he proposed to murder him,) than that he would not do it himself. Mudge.

Ver. 35. Spreading himself like a green bay-tree] *Like a native plant, or a tree in its native soil.* Mudge. *Like a flourishing cedar.* Houbigant, after the LXX, and many of the ancient versions. See Pf. xcii. 12. He likewise reads the beginning of the next verse after the same versions, and with much propriety, *I passed by.*

Ver. 38. Shall be destroyed together] Or, at once: "They "shall all at once be totally destroyed." See Pf. xlix. 10. in the Hebrew.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The way of duty is made very plain, and therefore we are more inexcusable, if we depart from it.

1. The Psalmist cautions us against envy and fretfulness because of the prosperity of the wicked. It had been a trial which himself had been beset with, and therefore he speaks from experience, which is the most effectual way of preaching.

2. He gives a strong argument to silence our impatience. The prosperity of the sinner is short and precarious, as the withering grass. Mark his end, and thou shalt not envy his way.

3. He prescribes the good that we should follow, as well as the evil that we should avoid; and, enjoying the better portion in God's favour, we should have no reason to envy any worldly possession.

P S A L. XXXVIII.

David moveth God to take compassion of his pitiful case.

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath; neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.

3 *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*

4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine

2dly, Abundant reasons are here urged, why we should patiently wait upon the Lord, and without anger, envy, or discontent, behold the prosperous sinner, and bear up under every cross that we may be called to suffer from him.

1. A variety of arguments for our quiet submission are here produced from the misery of sinners. [1.] Their destruction is near, even at the door. Their career is short; the longest life is but a step, and they are often surpris'd in the midst, and their soul required of them. Each moment is uncertain, each breath precarious, and then all their hopes perish, vanishing as the smoke from the altar. [2.] Their own devices shall fall upon them. Though crafty, cruel, and, in their own apprehension, confident of success, God mocks at their impotent designs, and turns the destruction which they had prepared for the defenceless poor upon their own heads. Their day is coming, a terrible day, when the wicked must tremble, and the righteous rejoice. [3.] When God arises to judgment, they shall perish for ever; his wrath, as the fire of the altar, shall burn, and none shall quench it: the wicked, as fuel for the flames, shall be consumed, or rather consuming yet unconsumed, in these everlasting burnings.

2. The unspeakably happier lot of the righteous, with all their troubles, should repress every murmur of discontent because of the apparent prosperity of the ungodly. [1.] *They shall inherit the earth.* The patient waiting of the faithful shall not be disappointed; the present world shall afford them a sufficiency; and in the new earth, where dwelleth righteousness, they shall have a sure possession. [2.] *They shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.* Whatever portion, be it less or more, they have below, one thing they enjoy better than the wealth of both the Indies, peace with God, and, as the effect of that, peace of conscience; a delightful peace, which makes even sufferings light, and adds a double relish to every enjoyment: a peace, to which the wicked are strangers; a peace which the world cannot give; and, blessed be God, cannot take away; and abundance of peace, not only while the sun and moon endure, or till life shall terminate, but permanent as the ages of eternity. [3.] *A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.* Of this world God's enemies have far the greater share; but without his blessings the sweetest draughts are bitter, and the worm of discontent at the root of their gourd makes it wither, when to appearance most flourishing. But the righteous man's little comes from the gift of God, is enjoyed in his love, and improved to his glory. He has the great seasoning of contentment in whatsoever state he is, and, sensible how unworthy he is of the least, every thing that he uses fills him with thankfulness. A dry crust, with a sweet favour of Christ, furnishes a more delicious meal, than the tables of luxury ever afforded. [4.] *The Lord upholdeth the righteous,*

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so that in all trials and difficulties he is supported within; and, as the everlasting arms are underneath him, he is safe from fear of evil. [5.] *The Lord knoweth the days of the upright.* He takes notice of his daily service, faithful to reward him; of his trials, to support him; of his sorrows, to comfort him; and gives him a sense of his love all the day long. [6.] *Their inheritance shall be for ever.* The portion of the faithful, blessed as it is, shall not be circumscribed by the narrow bounds of time; but in heaven there is reserved for them an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fadeth not away. [7.] They shall be never ashamed of their confidence. In general calamities they shall never be destitute; in the evil day of death their faith and joy shall not fail them; and in the day of judgment they shall have boldness to appear before the awful bar. Such present possessions, such eternal expectations, may well keep down every rising discontent. Why should we envy the ungodly their short-lived, embittered, unsatisfying, perishing enjoyments, when we have such a sufficient, satisfying, abiding portion here, and such a near prospect of a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory hereafter?

P S A L. XXXVIII.

Title. מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד לְהַזְכִּיר *mizmor ledavid lehaziir.* A psalm of David, &c.] *David's memorial psalm.* Whether David really laboured under any grievous sickness which gave occasion to this psalm; or whether, under the representation of a sick man, he poetically describes his own lamentable distress; this psalm was composed by him, to put him in remembrance of that affliction, with which he confesses his sinfulness had provoked God to visit him. Theodoret, and many other commentators, think that David was not sick; but that in this psalm he called to remembrance all the sad disasters which had befallen him; as the murder of his son Amnon, the rebellion of his son Absalom, and all the other calamities mentioned in his history. But Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that this psalm, as well as the three next, were occasioned by a grievous distemper with which David was afflicted, and which he considered as the chastisement of God upon him for his sins. That this calamity fell upon him about the time when a dangerous and rebellious conspiracy was formed against him, appears from the same psalms; and, so far as we hear of no more than one conspiracy of that kind formed against him, it follows that his sickness fell upon him about this time: and, that his distemper was that which is now known to us under the name of the small-pox, is, as I conceive, very probable from the same psalms. The reader will find this opinion defended in the 7th chapter of the 4th book of the Life of David. But, whether this psalm be understood in a literal or allegorical sense, David bewails his sins so pathetically in it, that it is reckoned among the penitential psalms. We would just observe,

M serve,

head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

5 My wounds stink *and* are corrupt, because of my foolishness.

6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

7 For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and *there is* no soundness in my flesh.

8 I am feeble and fore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

9 LORD, all my desire *is* before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

11 My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.

12 They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me*: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

13 But I, as a deaf *man*, heard not; and *I was* as a dumb man *that* openeth not his mouth.

14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth *are* no reproofs.

15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O LORD my God.

16 For I said, *Hear me*, lest *otherwise* they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippereth, they magnify *themselves* against me.

17 For I *am* ready to halt, and my sorrow *is* continually before me.

18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

serve, that by *bringing to remembrance*, in the title, may be meant his praying to God to remember him, and deliver him out of his afflictions.

Ver. 2. *For thine arrows, &c.] For thine arrows are entered deep into me, and thy hand is come down upon me.* Mudge.

Ver. 4. *For mine iniquities]* i. e. The punishment of them; as Ps. xxxi. 10. xxxii. 5.—*Are gone over my head*, is an allusion to the boisterous waves of the sea; under which a man who is shipwrecked is just ready to sink. This comparison is frequent in the psalms. Compare Ps. xlii. 7. lxix. 2. cxxiv. 4, 5.

Ver. 5. *Because of my foolishness]* i. e. “As a just punishment of my folly; whereby, to satisfy my unreason-able desires, I have inconsiderately offended thee.” See 2 Sam. xi. 2—4. David in the next verse represents the greatness of his affliction by the posture in which mourners walked at funerals; *I am bowed down greatly, &c.* Compare Ps. xxxv. 14.

Ver. 7. *For my loins are filled, &c.]* An anonymous writer on the psalms, who differs in opinion from Dr. Delaney, observes, that these words are not to be taken literally, but as figurative expressions, signifying the excessive misery and extreme wretchedness of the Psalmist's condition. We find the same way of speaking, and almost the same words, used in Scripture, for the same purpose, by the prophets. Thus Ezek. xxi. 6. *Sigh therefore, thou son of man! with the breaking of thy loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes:* where the latter part of the verse explains the former, meaning the same thing. So Isai. xxi. 3. exclaims upon a like occasion, *Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman who travaileth; I was bowed down at the hearing of it.* Now no man ever imagined that Ezekiel's loins were broken; or that Isaiah had a pain in his back, like that of a woman in labour; but every one understands these expressions properly; viz. as denoting the prophet's great grief and concern: and why should we not conclude that the prophet

David used the like expressions in a like sense; especially as he almost begins this psalm with bold figurative expressions, and describes his miserable condition, ver. 2. by the *arrows* of God sticking in him, and *his hand pressing him sore?* See also Ezek. xxix. 7. which should be, *and madest all their loins to shake;* by which this seems to have been a sort of proverbial expression, to signify great fear, as well as grief; and so we find Daniel describing the horror which seized Belshazzar, chap. v. ver. 6, *by the joints of his loins being loosed.*

Ver. 12. *Lay snares for me]* Use violence against me.

Ver. 15, 16. *For in thee, O Lord, &c.] For I wait for thee, O Lord; thou shalt answer, O Lord my God: ver. 16. For I thought with myself, lest they triumph over me: when my foot slippereth, &c.* David seems to give this 16th verse as a reason why he should not undertake his own defence, but leave himself wholly to God. For if he should attempt to do it in the weak condition wherein he then was, overwhelmed with his pains and sins, he should only give the enemy a fresh opportunity of insult; for his mouth could then utter nothing but his sins and pains, and this would be matter of triumph for them. Mudge.

REFLECTIONS.—1st,

1. David earnestly deprecates the wrath of God, the sense of which was the most intolerable part of his sufferings.

2. He spreads his distressing case before the Father of mercies, bewailing his wretchedness, but most bewailing his sins.

3. Though perplexed, he is not in despair. Hope supported his fainting heart; God knew that his groaning was no feigned sorrow; and *his desire*, all his desire *was before him*, who saw his deep distress, and what above all things he sought, even pardon and peace with God. *Note:* It is some comfort that when the penitent feels the sense of guilt, his compassionate God sees his anguish.

2dly, While within were fears, without were fightings.

19 But mine enemies *are* lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.

20 They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow *the thing that good is*.

21 Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me.

22 Make haste to help me, O LORD my salvation.

P S A L. XXXIX.

David's care of his thoughts. The consideration of the brevity and vanity of life. The reverence of God's judgments, and prayer, are the bridles of his impatience.

To the chief Musician, *even* to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.

I Said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

2 I was dumb with silence, I held my

His enemies took advantage of his sickness and distress to insult and assail him.

1. He complains of them to God, who was not an unconcerned spectator of their wickedness. *Note;* (1.) The great quarrel against the people of God is because of his image that they bear; whatever pretext is made use of, this enmity against God is at the bottom. (2.) So fixed is the hatred of the wicked against goodness for its own sake, that, though benefited by it, they detest it, abhor the prayers offered for them, and can scarcely give a civil answer to the kindest inquiries. (3.) When the views of our utter helplessness lead us to seek Divine strength, then shall we out of weakness be made strong.

2. He mentions, with satisfaction, his own unruffled temper under these provocations, and the cause of it; namely, that he committed his case to God, his covenant God, not doubting but in him to find a friend when all forsook him; and that he would *bear*, or *answer for him*; hear his prayer to help him, and answer for him by appearing in judgment as his vindicating God. *Note;* (1.) To be calm and composed under severe provocation, is the mark of a truly blessed spirit. (2.) It is wise to appear ignorant of many unkindnesses done us. (3.) When answering will but exasperate, we must be content silently to suffer. (4.) Thus did the Lamb of God appear dumb before his shearers. (5.) Hope in God is the great support against oppression and wrong. (6.) They who contentedly leave their cause with him, shall not be disappointed, nor want an advocate to plead for them.

3. Though he was silent before man, he is not silent before God, in whose presence he desires to humble his soul. To him he declares his iniquity, which had been the just cause of all his sufferings; and with unfeigned sorrow bewails his sins. *Note;* (1.) A sense of our own offences against God, will serve to make us patient under the provocation of men. (2.) They who have a true sight and sense of sin, cannot but be deeply sorry for having offended a God so holy, and grieved him who is so gracious.

4. He directs his prayer to God for help, for present help; *forsake me not, O Lord*; though left of all beside, let thy presence comfort, thy power support me: *O my God, be not far from me*; my God in whom, by promise, I have an interest; whose nearness to me I now peculiarly need; *make haste to help me*, for *I am ready to halt*, under such complicated and continual sorrow; *make haste then, O Lord, my salvation*; on thee I place my hope; from thee alone my help must come, and cheerfully I resign myself up to thee.

Let us then in the deepest affliction still trust in the Lord.

P S A L. XXXIX.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ לִידְיֻתוֹן *lamnatseach liiduthun.*] See what has been observed on the title to the former psalm. This, being of the same kind, is generally supposed to have been written on the same occasion. Here, as well as in that, David endeavours to prevent the scandal which good men take, while they are under afflictions, at the prosperity of the wicked; though he shews that upon some occasions it is very difficult not to be disturbed at it. *Jeduthun*, mentioned in the title, was one of the chief musicians, as appears from 1 Chron. xvi. 42. xxv. 1. 2 Chron. v. 12. We may just remark, that some have supposed that the psalm was occasioned by the death of Absalom, after Joab had represented to the king the inconsistency of his grief. The first and second verses seem to allude to his resolution to stifle his grief in the presence of Joab: in ver. 4. he prays for due preparation for his own death, and strongly alludes to the untimely end of Absalom. This is enforced ver. 6. wherein he blames himself for making such ample provision for his heir, who was cut off in so sudden a manner. *The reproach of the foolish*, ver. 8. might allude to the malicious interpretation which Joab or his other enemies might cast upon his affliction. The precariousness of human beauty, ver. 11. might refer to Absalom's remarkable beauty, in which he is said to have excelled all Israel. And the *strength* mentioned ver. 13. may allude to his loss of his two sons, Amnon and Absalom; children being frequently in Scripture styled the strength of their parents.

Ver. 2. I was dumb with silence] *I was dumb in silence; I held my peace from what is good; but my pain was irritated*: i. e. "I refrained from speaking what is good, from giving God the glory with relation to my illness, by acknowledging the greatness and justice of God, and the nothingness and sinfulness of man." This seems to shew, that the reason why he would not speak at all before his enemies was, because he did not care to give them an occasion of triumph; as he must by acknowledging his own weakness and sin. But he could not bear this restraint; it grew worse and worse; and therefore he burst out, &c. *Mudge*. I have before observed, and it is especially remarkable in the poetical parts of Scripture, that the whole energy and beauty of the passages are frequently spoiled by the addition of connective and other particles which are not in the Hebrew. There is a remarkable instance in the next verse;

M 2

which

peace, *even* from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: *then* spake I with my tongue.

4 LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it *is*; *that* I may know how frail I *am*.

5 Behold, thou hast made my days *as* an handbreadth; and mine age *is* as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity. Selah.

6 Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

7 And now, LORD, what wait I for? my hope *is* in thee.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

9 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst *it*.

10 Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth; surely every man *is* vanity. Selah.

12 Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I *am* a stranger with thee, *and* a sojourner, as all my fathers *were*.

which in the original is very expressive, *My heart grew hot within me—While I was musing, the fire flamed out:—I spake with my tongue.*

Ver. 4. Lord, make me to know mine end, &c.] *The Lord hath shewn me my end, and the measure of my days what it is: I know how perishing I am.* Mudge; who observes, that this translation seems much better to agree with what follows, and indeed the whole design of the psalm, than if in the imperative.

Ver. 5. Every man at his best state] *Every man living.* Mudge.

Ver. 6. In a vain shew] *In a vain shew of happiness.* Green. The word צֶלֶם *tsalem*, is only used twice in the psalms: Here, and Pf. lxxiii. 20. in both which places it signifies what is imaginary, in opposition to what is real. The Hebrew word יִצְבֵּר *itsbor* rendered, *He heapeth up*, signifies to rake together; in which there is an allusion to the husbandman's collecting his corn together before he carries it to the barn. The metaphor is elegant, intimating the precariousness of human life, and the vanity of human acquisitions; which, though heaped up together like corn by one person, may soon become the possession of another.

Ver. 9. I was dumb] This is a fine expression of the Psalmist's resignation. See Job, i. 21. and 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

Ver. 11. Like a moth] i. e. "As a moth consumes a garment." The Chaldee paraphrase has it, *like a moth broken asunder*; but the phrase is more properly applied to the moth's consuming other things, and not to the being itself consumed: thus Hosea, v. 12. *I will be to Ephraim as a moth*; i. e. "I will consume him." and Isai. l. 9. *The moth shall eat them as a garment.*

Ver. 12. For I am a stranger with thee, &c.] More like a stranger, and sojourner in this country, than an inhabitant or lord of it; *with thee*, who in a particular manner art the proprietor of this land, which thou hast chosen to be thy peculiar inheritance. *The land*, says Moses, *is thine; we are but strangers and sojourners with thee.* Lev. xxv. 23.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, This psalm contains much matter

for a mournful song, suited to soothe the sorrows which mortality is heir to, and reconcile our souls to the holy will of God.

David reflects upon the solemn purposes that he had formed, to watch over his words and ways; which was so needful when many eyes were upon him, waiting for his halting. *He said* within his heart, *I will take heed to my ways*, to walk circumspectly after the word and will of God. *I will keep my mouth with a bridle* from every murmuring expression under my trials, *while the wicked is before me*; who would take pleasure in seeing him provoked to speak unadvisedly with his lips. Note; (1.) We need much watchfulness and circumspection, in order to walk aright; a careless heart will make crooked ways. (2.) Nothing is more difficult to restrain than the tongue; and he is a perfect man who can always govern it.

2dly, The views of man's vanity bid him look for a more enduring portion in God. And therefore,

1. He professes that on him all his hope is stayed; and that, as he could expect nothing beneath the sun as his happiness, neither would he be disquieted with the light and momentary troubles to which he might be exposed. Note; (1.) The less we expect on earth, the more will our eyes be turned to heaven. (2.) All else is a vain hope; they who hope in God shall never be ashamed.

2. He prays for pardon and deliverance. His sins were his great concern; he longs above all things to be delivered from their condemning guilt and their prevailing power, that he may enjoy true peace of conscience. Note; (1.) Our ceaseless prayer must be for pardoning mercy, till obtained. The sting of affliction is removed, when sin is forgiven. (2.) One stroke of disease makes strange alterations; the bloom of beauty fades, the sparkling eye is dim, the ruddy lip is livid; and languor, paleness, and decay, mar all the lovely form. What poor things then to be proud of, what precarious vanities! (3.) The prayer of faith, and the tears of penitence, will never be disregarded of God. (4.) When we consider ourselves as really strangers upon earth, who neither have nor seek our rest below, every

13 O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

P S A L. XL.

The benefit of confidence in God. Obedience is the best sacrifice. The sense of David's evils inflameth his prayer.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

I Waited patiently for the LORD; and (he) inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

4 Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD

his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

5 Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

every trial that we meet will quicken our pace, and whet our longings after our house and home, a mansion in the skies.

3. With holy resignation he surrenders up himself to God; having begun to pray, his ruffled spirits are composed, and his soul returns to its rest again. Since God's hand is in every affliction, and every chastisement most righteous, yea, less than our iniquity deserves, it ill becomes us to find fault, but rather continually to acknowledge that he doth all things well.

P S A L. XL.

Title. למנצח לרוד מזור lamnatseach ledavid mizmor] Though this psalm, in its primary sense, may be applicable to the sickness which God had inflicted on David, and the distress to which he was reduced by his enemies (see the two foregoing psalms), in devout thankfulness for deliverance from both of which he may here be supposed to declare his resolution to serve God cheerfully and faithfully; yet some passages in it may be much better applied to Christ's readiness to do the will of his Father. Certain it is, that part of the psalm at least was prophetic, and related to our Saviour, to whom it is applied by the apostle. Heb. x.

Ver. 2. Out of an horrible pit] As David often compares himself in distress to a sinking and drowning man; so here he compares the affliction from which he had been relieved, to that of a man thrown into some loathsome and nauseous dungeon, with much filth in it; such a one, we will suppose, as Jeremiah was cast into, chap. xxxviii. 6. Mudge, observing that this is a metaphorical way of speaking familiar to the sacred writers, adds, "Though, perhaps, it may here be literal, and Jeremiah the author of the psalm after he had been delivered from his dungeon."

Ver. 4. Respecteth not the proud] The proud, and those who incline to lies, are, on one side, the haughty daring atheists, who laugh at all application to any power above; and on the other, those who put their confidence in idol-superstitions, which are all a lie and deceit. Mudge.

Ver. 5. Many, &c.] Many things hast thou done, O Lord,

my God: thy wonders and thy thoughts towards us, I am not able to set in order before thee.

Ver. 6, 7, 8. Sacrifice and offering, &c.] These three verses, as they may possibly relate to David, who was a type of Christ, may be thus considered.—*Sacrifice, &c.* The Psalmist here enumerates the principal sorts of sacrifices which were offered under the law. See on Psal. li. 19.—*Thou didst not desire; i. e.* "in comparison with obedience." Compare 1 Sam. xv. 22.—*But mine ears hast thou opened, or bored;* which was a ceremony used to a slave, who would not have his liberty, but loved his master, and would not go out free: Exod. xxi. 5, 6. Deut. xv. 7. and the ceremony was very significant; for boring the ear, signified opening it; and the opening of the ear, is a sign of hearkening, which in Scripture is frequently used for obeying. In allusion to this ceremony, God may here be said to have opened the ears of David, i. e. engaged him to obedience.—*Then said I, Lo, &c.* that is, "as if I had heard thee calling upon me, to do thee some exemplary service, I immediately said, Lo, I come, to make an offering of myself unto thee, and to pay thee a cheerful obedience." In the volume of thy book, means in thy law; which is here called a volume, because it was the manner of the Jews to roll up the books of the law. *It is written of me;* that is, so thy law particularly requires me as a king to do. Deut. xvii. 18, 19.—*Is within my heart,* means, "not only included in a book; but so treasured up in my mind, that I am perfectly in the knowledge, and continually exercised in the practice of it." Thus the passage may be explained in reference to David. But it relates in a higher and more proper sense to Christ; whom the Psalmist, while he is commemorating God's particular mercies to himself and his people, prophetically introduces as thus speaking with respect to the redemption of mankind. *Sacrifice, &c.* that is, "The sacrifices of the law are only typical and preservative: They make not a full satisfaction to thy infinite justice; and therefore thou dost not perfectly acquiesce in them."—*Mine ears, &c.* By this is intimated, in allusion to the exposition above given, Christ's taking upon him

9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.

10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

12 For innumerable evils have compassed

me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.

14 Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.

15 Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.

*the form of the servant, and becoming obedient, even unto death. See Philip. ii. 7. Then, that is, when he cometh into the world, &c. as the apostle explains it. Heb. x. 5. In the volume, &c. This may allude to instruments drawn up between masters and servants, and accordingly signify, the roll or contract betwixt God the Father, and God the Son; wherein is supposed to be written the agreement preparatory to that great work of Christ's incarnation, in which he, undertaking perfectly to fulfil the will of God and to perform all obedience to him, had the promise from him that he should become the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him. See Fenton; and more on this subject when we come to Heb. x. For my own part, I cannot help thinking, that the passage immediately and primarily refers to Christ; and indeed the whole psalm appears to have greater propriety, when understood as delivered in his person, than in that of another. See Pearse on the Hebrews, and Saurin's Sermon's, vol. xi. The whole passage may be rendered thus: ver. 6. Sacrifice and offering didst thou not delight in, &c. ver. 7. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the folded roll, or roll of writing, it is written of me, ver. 8. That I should do thy will: O my God, I have delighted therein; yea, thy law, &c. Mr. Green, upon the passage Thou hast opened my ears, observes, If it be said, that the apostle to the Hebrews reads this differently; I answer, this does not appear to me. It is true, he found a different, but corrupted translation (*ωτια, ears*, as the learned have observed, having been changed into *σωμα, body*) in the LXX which was the version then in use; and he was obliged to quote it as he found it, under the penalty, if he altered it, of being deemed a false quoter. He therefore took the translation as he found it, especially as it served to illustrate his argument equally well. Upon this quotation from the LXX the apostle argues, ver. 9. He [Christ] taketh away the first, (namely, legal sacrifices) that he may establish the second, (namely, obedience to God's will,) in offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of mankind: And thus he must have argued upon a quotation from the Hebrew text as it stands at present.*

Ver. 9. I have preached righteousness] The person speaking here declares that he has done what God required. If we understand it of David, the benefits and mercies which God had vouchsafed to him and his people must be meant by *righteousness*; but if of Christ, as seems most proper,

then it must refer to the *righteousness of God revealed by faith*, and made known by Jesus Christ to his church.

Ver. 15. Let them, &c.] { *with their own shame for a*
They shall be desolate } *reward of their turpitude.*
Green renders it, after Bishop Hare, *Let those who say unto me, aha, abu, instantly return back with shame.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, None ever yet trusted in God, and were confounded. The Psalmist acknowledges, by blessed experience, that in his deepest distress God had not failed him. *I waited patiently for the Lord*; though his burden was heavy, and help long delayed, he fainted not, but cried unto God, and God heard and answered him. *He brought me up also out of the horrible pit of despondence, and out of the miry clay*, in which he had been fastened, and set my feet upon a rock, where his faith was strengthened and confirmed, and established my goings, that no power of evil might be able to turn him aside. Then was his mouth filled with joy; he hath put a new song of praise into my mouth; and from his own experience he doubted not but others would be encouraged to exercise the same faith; *many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord*; and whoever so doth, renouncing every other confidence, will be found truly blessed and happy. Thus Jesus waited on God, when agonizing in the garden, and bleeding on the tree: horrible indeed was the pit in which he lay, when, loaded with the guilt of all our iniquities, the pains of hell gat hold upon him; but he cried, and God heard him. From the grave he brought him up, raised him to the throne of glory, firm as a rock, and established as the days of eternity. With everlasting joy upon his head, there he reigns; and all his people, renouncing every other hope of righteousness, and every lying vanity which would draw off the singleness of their eye from him, look to him, trust in him, fear him, and find themselves blessed in so doing. This relieves their despondence, rescues them from the horrible pit of hell, raises their hearts from melancholy fears to confidence, and changes their voice from mourning to praise; rejoicing in Christ Jesus, in his sufferings, intercession, and infinite merit, and deriving from thence joy unspeakable and full of glory.

2dly. Then follow the words of the Divine Redeemer the song of praise put into his mouth. Many and wonderful are the works of God, wonders of creation and providence,

16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified.

17 But I *am* poor and needy; yet the LORD thinketh upon me: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

P S A L. XLI.

God's care of the poor. David complaineth of his enemies' treachery: he fleeth to God for succour.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

BLESSED is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

dence, admirably ordered and disposed with infinite wisdom, all designed for the good of men, and so innumerable, that we are lost in the vast abyss, and know not where to begin or where to end the song of praise: but one more eminent, more transcendantly glorious than all the rest, stands forth, and claims peculiar admiration. Great is the work of worlds, spoke into being at a word; great the upholding power which still preserves and regulates with wondrous harmony the vast creation; but greater far the vast design and wonderous execution of man's redemption, by the incarnation, sufferings, and death of God's eternal Son.

1. The insufficiency of all ceremonial sacrifices is here intimated, and their utterly ceasing to be offered when the oblation of Jesus once for all should abolish these shadows. They were indeed of divine institution, but all their efficacy lay in directing the offerer's faith to the vicarious sufferings of the Son of God: for their own sakes they were never acceptable to God, who could take no delight in the blood of bulls; nor could they ever pacify the sinner's conscience, which required a better sacrifice than these to take away sin.

2. The voluntary oblation of Christ, in consequence of the divine designation, is mentioned. *Mine ears hast thou opened*, or, as the apostle quotes it, *a body hast thou prepared me*, and this his choice: it was not what he was obliged to, but by voluntary engagement, and the constrainings of mighty love towards miserable man. But, having once engaged, he ratifies the agreement, professes his readiness to abide by it; yea, takes delight in executing it; and from his heart is ready to fulfil all the will of God respecting his mediatorial work, whether by obedience or sufferings. *Note*; If Christ so readily engaged for us, what gratitude and willing subjection do we owe him in return?

3. He became himself the great preacher of the redemption that he wrought out; in which also God's faithfulness to his promises appeared, and his transcendent loving-kindness to the children of men. These Jesus declared, nor kept back from us any thing of the whole counsel of God. Blessed be his name, that his divine sermons have reached unto us: oh! that we may experience divine teaching also, and read so as to understand.

3dly, Though the latter part of this psalm may refer to the Psalmist's case, as resuming his prayer in the view of the glorious redemption accomplished for him, yet it may be also well applied to the Redeemer himself.

1. In executing his work, he must bear our sins, and carry our sorrows; and under these he complains and cries for help. Though in himself without sin, holy and harmless, yet when he appeared in our nature he became sin for us, that is to say, an offering for sin, for all our

sins; so that, in this view, never was a guilty soul so heavy laden: more than human strength was needful to support the dreadful load; the humanity fainted, but by the eternal Spirit he was upheld. He prays, and pleads the truth and grace engaged to support him through his sufferings; and, as his distress is urgent, he cries for present and immediate help, and was heard because he feared.

Note; (1.) Since Jesus sunk not under the load of the sins of the world, shall our sins lead us to despair? God forbid. (2.) They who continue to trust in the Divine faithfulness, may depend upon seeing the fulfilment of the promises. (3.) There is a throne of grace open, and through Jesus we may come boldly; no tender mercy will be withheld, no kindness refused, no help delayed, when through his name we pray in faith.

2. He prays for, or prophecies, the confusion of all his enemies, which he foresees ready to be accomplished. The powers of hell which sought to destroy him, must fall as lightning before him; the Jews who at his crucifixion cried insultingly, "Aha, so would we have it," are long since desolate to their shame, dispersed among all the nations, and every where a proverb of reproach; and all his foes, whether fallen angels or impenitent sinners, must at the last day feel the effects of his indignation, driven backward into hell, and covered with everlasting confusion. *Note*; All the afflictions of a saint of God, however Satan and his enemies may insult over him, shall terminate to his comfort and their confusion.

3. He prays for his faithful ones, those *that love thy salvation*; love him, the author of it, and delight in the gracious way in which it is accomplished for them, and bestowed upon them; and *seek thee*, make God's will their rule, God's glory their end, and the enjoyment of God their sovereign happiness. Let them rejoice, on earth beginning the song of praise, and to eternity crying *continually, the Lord be magnified*.

4. He concludes with a believing resignation of himself to God. Though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor and needy; yet the Lord regarded him in his low estate; and therefore, trusting in his saving help and deliverance, he cries to him to make no delay. *Note*; (1.) Our spiritual poverty is great; but we have an inexhaustible treasury, which the key of prayer can unlock. (2.) In every trial, let us not think the time long; the promise is sure to persevering faith, the moment halting by, time expiring, eternity approaching, and there the consummate happiness and glory of the faithful shall be accomplished.

P S A L. XLI.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד lamnatseach mizmor le-david.] The ground of this psalm is the same with that of the 38th and 39th. The author labours under some

2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies.

3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

4 I said, LORD be merciful unto me: heal

my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

5 Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?

6 And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.

7 All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.

some illness. He complains of the insult and treachery of his enemies, and of one in particular: he prays to be relieved, and accordingly is relieved. This mercy of God to him, he seems to attribute in the first three verses to his own compassion for the afflicted. Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that this psalm was written by David after his sickness, when Absalom conspired against him. There is no doubt (says he) but the king, who, as we suppose, discovered the conspiracy in his sickness, took immediate measures to defeat it, as soon as he found himself recovering: Nor is it improbable that he dissimulated his recovery as long as he could, to prevent the effects of his son's ambition and impetuosity; who appears sufficiently from this psalm to have been determined upon his father's destruction, and fully resolved to out-do the malignity of his disease, and cut him off, if that should spare him; for those, I am satisfied, are Absalom's own words, recorded by David in the 8th verse, *And now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more.* It must doubtless have been matter of great surprise, and inexpressible affliction, to David, to find the two men in the world, whom he seems to have loved and most confided in, combining against him, and compassing his death. Absalom and Achitophel, his son and his counsellor: both of these are, as I apprehend, clearly characterised in this psalm: the vanity and lying spirit of Absalom in the 6th verse, and the treachery of Achitophel in the 9th, where we have a complaint, not only of trust betrayed, but of the rights of hospitality violated. The man who did this *had eaten of his bread.* In this exigency David had recourse, as usual, to the divine mercy and protection, ver. 10. and finding their devices so far defeated as not to terminate in his immediate destruction, he gradually gathered hope and confidence from that delay; which he quickly perceived not to have arisen from any abatement of their malignity, but from the interposition of providence in his behalf, ver. 11, 12. If it be urged, that all this is only a comment upon a psalm, not grounded upon any historical relation; I answer, that the psalm itself is plainly historical; is confessedly written by David, and personally applied to himself; and consequently must refer to some circumstances of his life: It can refer to no other but this; and when applied to this gives, as I conceive, new light to the sacred historian's account of Absalom's rebellion. See Life of David, p. iv. c. 8. I would only observe, that, supposing the truth of this application, David may properly be considered here as the type of Christ, and Achitophel of Judas; in which view the whole may be applied to our Saviour, who has led us to this application, by referring one verse of it to himself. See John, xiii. 18.

Ver. 3. Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.] Thou turnest all his bed in his sickness. This expresses the ease and refreshment which God had just before given him in his sickness; as great as a person feels from his bed being made up smooth around him. Mudge.

Ver. 4. Heal my soul.] As rational conjectures, says Dr. Delaney, are oftentimes useful inlets to knowledge, the candid reader will, I hope, be indulgent to mine, in relation to David's distemper, (see the note on the title of the 38th psalm,) which I am far from obtruding as a truth; for, after all, possibly, all his psalms upon this head may be no more than figurative descriptions of the state of his mind, sick with sin; nor is this supposition ill-grounded upon the present verse: And, agreeably to this way of thinking, we find sin figured out to us, in the prophetic style, under the ideas of *bruises*, and *wounds*, and *putrifying sores*, Isai. i. 6. See on Pf. xxxviii. 7. We cannot any where introduce more properly the following judicious observations from Bishop Lowth's 8th Prelection.

"The Hebrew laws," says he, "are very much occupied in discriminating things clean and unclean, in removing and expiating what is foul, polluted, profane; in which ceremonies, as under a veil, the most holy and weighty meanings are couched, as is evident from the thing itself, as well as from many plain and express declarations. Amongst these, certain diseases and infirmities of the body have place; which, however light they may seem to a cursory, appear of great consequence to an attentive reader. It is on this account not to be wondered, that the sacred poets apply these images in expressing the most important matters, when they either lay open the defilement of the human mind, wholly depraved and contaminated; Isai. xlv. 6. or Ezek. xxxvi. 17. or lament the miserable, abject, and most contemptible lot of the virgin, the daughter of Zion, spoiled and made bare: Lam. i. 8, 9. 17. ii. 2. Images which, considered in themselves, are truly deformed and hateful; if referred to their true origin, and to religion, are devoid neither of weight nor majesty. Of this kind, or at least analogous to this kind, are those which the royal poet (who in his divine poems generally sustains a character far more august than his own) pours forth full of sorrow and the most ardent affections; when he complains, as in Pf. xxxviii. that he is worn down, and wearied out with punishments and sufferings, and entirely depressed with the most grievous burden of sin, to the support whereof human nature is absolutely unequal: In which passages some have enquired under what disease the writer then laboured; not less absurdly, in my judgment,

8 An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him: and *now* that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.

10 But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

11 By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

12 And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.

13 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

“ment, than if they had sought after the situation and name of the river in which he was plunged, when he says that he was overwhelmed with great floods of waters.”

Ver. 8. *An evil disease, &c.*] Or, *A word of Belial cleaveth, &c.* Literally, says Houbigant, *a thing of Belial is poured out upon him*; i. e. his wickedness is brought round upon, or overflows him. Green renders it, *Let the base thing he has been guilty of stick close to him.*

Ver. 9. *Hath lifted up his heel against me*] *Hath shewn great treachery towards me.* Mudge. St. John, who wrote in Greek, quotes the words from the Greek version, as he found them, without altering the translation.

Ver. 12. *And as for me, thou upholdest, &c.*] *Accordingly, for my own part, because of my integrity, thou hast upheld me, and set me before thy face for ever.* Mudge; who observes, that as the division of the Psalms into five books or portions is quite arbitrary, they seem to have ended them where they happened to find such a doxology as in the last verse; yet, as not only this but the three following verses end with the same doxology, I am rather inclined to the opinion of Bishop Hare and other learned commentators, who think that these doxologies were added to the end of each book by the person who collected and digested the Psalms.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The labour of love is never labour lost; so the Psalmist assures us.

1. He pronounces the man blessed who considereth the poor; either in general the poor in this world, compassionating their wants, sympathizing with them in their sorrows, and seeking by counsels, influence, and liberal distribution, to relieve the distressed of the necessitous; or it may refer to *that poor man whom so few remember*, Eccles. ix. 15. the lowly Jesus, exposed for our sakes to want, and having nowhere to lay his head: to consider his humiliation for us, is the way to true blessedness.

2. He shews wherein this blessedness consists. In trouble, God would deliver him, preserve him from his enemies, support him on the bed of languishing, and tenderly watch over him in his sickness. *Note*; (1.) Kindness to God's poor and afflicted ones, is highly our interest as well as duty; none ever lost by lending thus to the Lord. (2.) God's blessing is the comfort of every estate; it can make the bed of languishing cheerful, give rest in trouble, and make even grief to smile.

3. Having some good hope, through grace, that he could claim the character, he is emboldened in prayer to seek the promises. Yet, as a miserable sinner, in himself

utterly undeserving, he pleads for mercy with God, and begs that his sickness may be healed, that worst and most dangerous disease, corruption in his soul.

2dly, They who live in a wicked world, may expect to meet with much deceit, as David did, to the great discomfort of his soul.

1. They spoke against him with inveterate rancour, and wished that every evil might attend him; death seized his body, and blot out his name for ever. And thus did Christ's enemies revile him with every opprobrious character, wish and contrive his death, and hope that then the memory of his miracles, and the doctrines of his gospel, would perish with him. But lo! their malice makes his memorial more glorious and abiding. Let not Christ's servants count it strange, then, if the worst wishes and words attend them: their Lord hath suffered it before them.

2. If they came on pretence of paying him a friendly visit, their professions were hypocrisy, their designs malignant, to observe his words and behaviour, that they might report them to his disadvantage. The Scribes and Pharisees for this purpose attended the Saviour, to entangle him in his talk; and, while they pretended to admire him in his preaching and piety, sought to impeach him as a teacher of sedition. If we meet with the same deceitful men, and hear the most invidious remarks or misrepresentations made of us, let us remember that so was our Lord treated.

3. They flattered themselves that they should sooner or later prevail. In secret they whispered, plotted their wicked devices; and when *an evil disease*, some dangerous sickness, seized him, or some vile aspersion, which they had forged and propagated, cleaved to him, then they hoped he would never again recover his health or his character. Such whisperers contrived the Saviour's death; with perjured evidence the sons of Belial swore against him; and having procured his condemnation and death, and sealed his sepulchre, they promised themselves he should never rise up again. How vain the hopes, as well as vile the efforts, of wicked men!

4. His bosom friend betrayed him, and sought to spurn him from his throne, in return for the most obliging kindness. Ingratitude is a sin almost as common as odious. We are assured, John, xiii. 18. that David looked farther than his own case. Judas the traitor was his familiar friend, and, from the very table where Jesus fed him, went to the priests to betray him. Put not your trust in any child of man; friends may be faithless; the friend of sinners alone will never deceive or disappoint those who trust him.

5. He directs his prayer to God for mercy and help, that

P S A L. XLII.

David's zeal to serve God in the temple: he encourageth his soul to trust in God.

To the chief musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah.

AS the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living

that he may requite them, either do them good for the evil, or rather, as their king, punish them for their wickedness.—In answer to the Redeemer's prayer, he was raised from the dust of death, and with swift destruction recompensed his enemies into their own bosom. Neither Satan nor all the powers of darkness, nor the high-priest and all his wicked train, were permitted to triumph, when on the resurrection-day all their devices were confounded; and he, of whom they said, Persecute him, for there is none to deliver him, arose then most eminently, declared to be the Son of God with power. *Note;* The very trials that we are exposed to, serve to make the love of God to souls more evident and precious.

6. He expresses his confidence in God, and acknowledges that the work must be entirely God's grace, both to uphold and reward him. The Son of David, in unspotted integrity, stood fast; and, after an obedience unto death, received the reward in glory, where now he sits at God's right hand, enthroned for evermore. May we come in his good time to sit down by him! In order thereto, we must be sensible, [1.] That the work is entirely of grace. [2.] That, left to ourselves, we must inevitably fall.

7. He concludes with a thanksgiving for such a glorious hope; and well he deserves the everlasting praise who brings the faithful soul to everlasting blessedness. The whole Israel of God, the faithful of every age, in the view of this glorious work, cannot but echo back the sound, with hearts warm with gratitude, and bursting with gladness: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen!*

P S A L. XLII.

Title. למנצח משכיל לבני קרח *lamnatseach maskiil libnei korach.*] This begins the Second Book of Psalms: the first part of which consists of pieces directed to the sons of Korah, to be set or sung by them under the direction of the chief musician who led the band. Some of these were undoubtedly the composition of David, as it is evident that most of those in the latter part of this book are directed in the same manner, and are unanimously acknowledged to have been written by him. When he composed this Psalm, it is manifest that his mind was fluctuating with despondence and hope: what the particular occasion was, is not expressed; but it is generally believed, that it was upon the rebellion of Absalom, when he was driven away from the house and service of God. The more we attend to this Psalm, the better shall we discern its beauties. It is an exquisite performance; in which David gives us in his own example

God: when shall I come and appear before God?

3 My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

4 When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy-day.

a lively and natural image of a great and good man in affliction; and this is worked up with as much art and address as perhaps is to be found in any writing of the same kind. The fluctuating state of the mind even of a good man, which, when greatly oppressed, may be at sometimes desponding, and then again at others recollecting and correcting itself with religious considerations, is carried on throughout, and makes the repetition of the 5th and 6th verses at the end of the Psalm exceedingly beautiful. David's distress is finely and poetically set forth, aggravated with these three considerations: his absence from the worship of God in his tabernacle, the severe insults and blasphemous reproaches of his enemies, and the sad comparison which he could not but make between his present miserable circumstances and those of his prosperous and happy state. Finding himself in a melancholy and desponding state of mind from these thoughts, ver. 5. He corrects himself with a recollection of God's powerful providence, ver. 6. But (ver. 9.) his reflections on his miserable condition return more horrid than they were before. At length, however, he resumes his confidence, and concludes with the same persuasion which had consoled him, ver. 6. See Bishop Lowth's 23d Prelection.

Ver. 1. As the hart panteth] *As the hart brayeth.* Mudge. The original word אָרָג *arag*, is strong, and expresses that eagerness and fervency of desire, which extreme thirst may be supposed to raise in an animal almost spent in its flight from the pursuing dogs. Nothing can give us a higher idea of the Psalmist's ardent and inexpressible longing to attend the public worship of God, than the burning thirst of such a hunted animal for a cooling and refreshing draught of water. The energy of the expressions in the next verse is very striking and sublime: "My soul thirsteth for God; even for the living God:" him who is the eternal spring of life and comfort;—after which he bursts out into that emphatical interrogation, *When, when will the happy hour return, that I shall once more come and appear before God?* When shall I be so happy as to have access again to his tabernacle, where he manifests his presence, and from whence I am now driven by those who seek my life?

Ver. 3. My tears have been my meat day and night] i. e. "I am wholly given over to grief and sorrow; whilst I hear the continual reproaches of mine enemies, saying unto me, What is become of thy God, in whom thou wast wont to repose so much confidence?" See Archbishop Sharp's Sermons, vol. iii. p. 2, &c.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites from the hill Mizar.

7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

8 Yet the LORD will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his

song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

10 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?

11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Ver. 4. When I remember these things, &c.] When I call to mind those things, my soul is melted within me; when I marched along under a scarlet canopy to the house of God, with the voice of shout and praise; a tumultuous crowd of people keeping holy-day. The Psalmist says, that his soul was melted within him when he called to mind past times, when on solemn days he paid his devotions at the sanctuary. Mudge.

Ver. 5. Why art thou cast down, &c.] Bishop Hare, Mr. Mudge, &c. &c. concur in reading this period in the same manner as the last periods of this and the next Psalm are read.

Ver. 6. And of the Hermonites, &c.] And Hermonim from the little hill. See Wall, and the version of the Liturgy of the Church of England. Mudge reads, from the little mountain of the Hermons. His soul being cast down, he knows no better way of raising his spirits than by reflecting upon God, where he now is, even beyond Jordan. This he does, ver. 8, 9. Hermon probably rose in more eminences than one, and therefore is expressed plurally; one of them, perhaps smaller than the rest, is called here מִצְעָר Mitsaar, the little one; from whence probably he used to cast a wistful eye towards Jerusalem. But Bishop Hare observes, that Hermon being nowhere read in the plural, should not be so read here.

Ver. 7. Deep calleth unto deep] Bishop Lowth observes, that no metaphor occurs more frequently in the sacred poems than that by which grievous and sudden calamities are expressed under the image of overflowing waters. The Hebrews seem to have had this very familiar, from the peculiar nature of their country. They saw the river Jordan before their eyes, twice every year overflowing its banks (Josh. iii. 15.; 1 Chron. xii. 15.) when the snows of Lebanon and the neighbouring mountains, melting at the beginning of the summer, increased with sudden torrents the waters of the stream. Besides, the country of Palestine was not watered with many constant rivers, but, as being principally mountainous, was obnoxious to frequent torrents bursting through narrow vallies after the stated seasons of rain; from whence Moses himself commended this country (Deut. viii. 7.; xi. 10, 11.) to the Israelites who were about to invade it, as very dissimilar to every thing they had seen in Egypt before, or lately in the deserts of Arabia. This image, there-

fore, is used by all poets, but may be esteemed particularly familiar, and, as it were, domestic to the Hebrews; and, accordingly they apply it very frequently. The poet seems to have expressed the very face of nature such as it then presented itself to him, and to have transferred it to himself and his circumstances, when, from the land of Jordan and the mountains situated at the rise of that flood, he utters the most ardent expressions of his grief, with that impetuosity and boldness of words:

Abyss calleth to abyss, thy cataracts roaring around;
All thy waves and waters have overwhelmed me.

See his 6th Prelection.

The author of the *Observations* is of opinion, p. 324. that our translation of *water-spouts* is just. Natural philosophers, says he, often make mention of water-spouts, which are most surprising appearances; but hardly any of the commentators that I have observed speak of them, though our translators have here used the term, and the Psalmist seems to be directly describing those phenomena, and painting a storm at sea; and none of them, I think, take notice of the frequency of them on the Jewish coast, and, consequently, that it was natural for a Jewish poet to mention them in the description of a violent and dangerous storm. That this however is the fact, we learn from Dr. Shaw, who tells us in his *Travels*, p. 333. that *water-spouts are more frequent* near the lakes of Latikea, Greego, and Carmel, than in any other part of the Mediterranean. These were all places on the coast of Syria, and the last of them, every body knows, in Judea; it being a place rendered famous by the prayers of the prophet Elijah. The Jews then could not be ignorant of what frequently happened on their coasts; and David must have known of these dangers of the sea, if he had not actually seen them, as Dr. Shaw did. Strange then, since this is the case, that commentators should speak of these *water-spouts* as only meaning *vehement rains*, or that any should imagine that he compares his afflictions to the pouring of water through the spouts of a house, as Bythner seems to do in his *Lyra*; when they have nothing to do with a storm at sea, which the Psalmist is evidently describing! See Poole's *Synopsis* on the place. Others have observed, that these spouts are often seen in the Mediterranean; but I do not remember to have seen it

P S A L. XLIII.

David, praying to be restored to the temple, promises to serve God joyfully: he encourageth his soul to trust in God.

JUDGE me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

2 For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

3 O fend out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

any where remarked, before I read Dr. Shaw, that they are more frequent on the Syrian and Jewish coast than on any other part of this sea.

Ver. 8. Yet the Lord will command, &c.] In the day-time the Lord commanded his favour, I say; and in the night his song is in my mouth; a prayer to my living God. He applies to God day and night. In the day-time he prays God to command his favour to attend him; and in the night he has always a song directed to him. I cannot withhold from my reader in this place, the ingenious Mr. Merrick's paraphrase of this and the two foregoing verses:

Thy mercies, Lord, before my eyes
Shall yet in sweet remembrance rise;
Tho' now, with mournful step, and slow,
O'er Jordan's lonely banks I go,
And, exil'd from thy much-lov'd dome,
On distant Hermon pensive roam;
Deeps to confederate deeps aloud
Have call'd, and from the burbling cloud
Their licens'd rage the storms have shed,
And heap'd their billows o'er my head.
Yet, midst the storm, and midst the wave,
Thy love the beams of comfort gave:
Thy name to rapture prompts my tongue,
My joy by day, by night my song:
To thee my soul ascends in prayer,
And in thy bosom pours its care.

Ver. 10. As with a sword in my bones] The reproaches which my adversaries cast upon me are as a sword in my bones. Bishop Hare. i. e. "Their reproaches and calumnies are "as painful to my soul, as the stab of a sword would "be to my heart." See Ps. lv. 21.; lix. 7.

Ver. 11. The health of my countenance] The salvation of my countenance; i. e. The preserver of my person, which is chiefly expressed in the countenance; or rather the support of my face; he who enableth me to hold up my face; which is equivalent to another expression, the lifter up of my head. Mudge.

REFLECTIONS.—We have here,

1. The eager longings of David's soul after communion with God in the courts of his sanctuary. Like the hart flying before the blood-thirsty hounds, parched with heat, and panting for breath, with such intense desires is he athirst for God, for a sense of his love and favour, even for the living God, the only fountain of true felicity. *Note;* (1.) Nothing but God will satisfy the believer's soul; a sense of his love is his supreme happiness; and, if that be withdrawn, every other enjoyment is tasteless. (2.) While foolish men, with eager impatience, seek from their broken cisterns of earthly comforts to slake their raging thirst: how few feel these ardent desires after the

living fountain! (3.) Constrained absence from the means of grace is a fore burden to the true believer, and quickens his longings after them. (4.) If God's sanctuary was so desirable, how much more his beatific presence in his eternal temple!

2. He laments the sorrows which oppressed him, the insults that he sustained from his taunting enemies, and his dejection under the views of the blessings he had lost and the miseries he endured. The heathens, among whom he dwelt, upbraided him as having no visible God, while their idols stood in their temples; or his Jewish enemies reproached him, as if he was now abandoned of God, because he appeared not instantly for his relief. These things melted his heart with sorrow, and made his eyes as fountains of tears which, flowing ceaseless, mingled with his cup, or so affected him, that he forgot to eat his bread; while the remembrance of past happy days rose up to aggravate his distress in that strange land, where no songs of Zion were heard, no holy festivals observed to Jehovah, nor multitude of worshippers appeared, crowding his gates with sacrifices of praise.

3. Under all, he encourages his heart in God. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, so broken, so dispirited, and why art thou disquieted within me, as if all were lost, and help despaired of? hope thou in God, cast this firm anchor there, and then thou shalt not only ride out the storm in safety, but, when these thick clouds disperse before his bright beams, the light of his countenance shall return, and the language of my ransomed soul be praise. Note;* (1.) In our distresses it is good to reason with our souls, why am I thus? We often cause our own dejection, by poring on our trials or afflictions, and forgetting the promises, grace, and faithfulness of our Redeemer. (2.) In heaven at least all the sorrows of the faithful shall end, and the never-clouded light of God's countenance fill their souls with everlasting consolations.

P S A L. XLIII.

Title.] The subject of this Psalm is so much the same with that of the preceding, that one is strongly tempted to believe it to be a continuation of it, particularly as there is no title to interrupt. Mudge. There seems however this difference, that the former was written when the affairs of the Psalmist were at the worst; but this, when they began to amend; when he had greater hopes of repossessing his kingdom, and recovering the command of his beloved Zion, where the tabernacle of God resided.

Ver. 1. An ungodly nation] חסיד לֹא חָפִּיד lo chafid. Chafid generally signifies passively a person or nation favoured of God. Under which notion it is applied to the Jewish nation in general, and some favoured persons in particular; but

4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, 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 praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

P S A L. XLIV.

The church, in memory of former favours, complaineth of her present evils: professing her integrity, she fervently prayeth for succour.

To the chief musician, for the sons of Korah, Maschil.

WE have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, *what* work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

2 *How* thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; *how* thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.

3 For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

4 Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.

5 Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.

6 For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.

7 But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.

8 In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.

but sometimes it signifies actively *generous, beneficent, or the like*; therefore, if David here speaks of the people in rebellion against him, לֹא חַסִּיד *lo chafid* must signify an *ungenerous, unkind, and ungrateful nation*. Achitophel will well answer the character of a *deceitful and crooked man*.

Ver. 2. Why go I mourning] See ver. 9. of the preceding Psalm. David left Jerusalem mourning.

Ver. 4. My exceeding joy] Or, as it is literally translated in the Margin of our Bibles, *The gladness of my joy*; i. e. The great author of all the joy that I have.

REFLECTIONS.—We have here,

1. David's appeal and prayer to God. Though in God's fight he would cry, Enter not into judgment; yet, with respect to his enemies, he desired nothing more than to be tried at the bar of God; where his innocence would certainly engage him for his advocate against the ungodly nation of Israel, and his unnatural son.

2. Under the most discouraging circumstances, he professes his fixed dependance on divine support: his foolish reason could hardly be reconciled to his oppressed situation, and his unbelieving fears were ready to prevail; but he cleaves to God, as the God of his strength; and if so, Omnipotence was his guard.

3. He prays for God's guidance and direction, his light of divine teaching, and his truth in the revealed word, to lead him safe through all his difficulties and dark providences, and once more to bring him back to that happy hill and blest abode, where God's honour dwelled.

4. He promises hereupon to compass God's altar; and his voice, like his harp in tune, should utter grateful sacrifices of praise to him; *my God*, he says, *my covenant God*, whom I have ever found gracious, good, and true, and *my exceeding joy*; joy too big for utterance, and which time is too short to tell. *Note*; (1.) We have an altar that it becomes us ever to approach with joy, remembering the

sacrifice which Jesus hath offered, and the inestimable blessings we receive thereby. (2.) When we can say, *my God*, we shall be able ever to add, *my joy, my exceeding joy*; since, compared with him and his love, we shall rejoice in other things as though we rejoiced not.

P S A L. XLIV.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ לְבְנֵי קֹרַח מַשְׁכִּיל *lamnatseach libnei korach maschil*.] This Psalm appears to have been composed at a time when the Jewish people suffered greatly from their enemies, and many were carried into captivity; though the state itself subsisted, and the public worship of God was maintained. The author, by the singular number which occurs every now and then, must have been of eminence; it could not sound well out of any mouth but that of the prince himself; therefore either the prince, or some one about his person, must have been the writer; not unlikely, as Bishop Patrick thinks, Hezekiah; and perhaps from ver. 15, 16. it was written soon after the blasphemous message of Rabshakeh. Mudge.

Ver. 2. How thou didst afflict, &c.] *How thou didst enfeeble the nations, and spread them*;—our fathers, ver. 1. That is, madest them shoot forth their roots and branches, which they were enabled to do by enfeebling their enemies, as they were first planted in the place from whence they were removed. See Mudge and Houbigant.

Ver. 3. The light of thy countenance] This expression here seems to signify the special, the majestic presence of God, visibly presiding over the army of the Israelites, by a light shining cloud going before them and conducting them; so that the words here will be best rendered by *the light of thy presence*, and not by *the light of thy countenance*; which is the same with God's *favour*, the mention whereof follows in the next words, as the ground or reason of this his shining presence, and not as the thing itself.

Ver. 4. Thou art my king, O God] *Thou---the same, art my king, O God: command victories for Jacob*. As he was the

9 But thou hast cast off and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.

10 Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.

11 Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.

12 Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase *thy wealth* by their price.

13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.

14 Thou makest us a by-word among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.

15 My confusion *is* continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me.

16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.

17 All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.

18 Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;

19 Though thou hast fore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.

20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;

21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

22 Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

the same God who was still their king, it was equally in his power now to give them success, which they would take care never to attribute to their own strength, but to the blessing of God upon them. Mudge.

Ver. 9. But] *אין* ap: The force of the particle seems to be this: "Instead of giving us victory, thou hast even cast us off."

Ver. 12. Thou sellest thy people for nought] "Sufferest them to be sold for slaves at a very inconsiderable price." This expression implies the low esteem in which they were with the Deity. The next expression, according to Dr. Hammond, means, "We are thus sadly handled, without the comfort of bringing in any honour to thee by our calamities; since thy church among us is defaced, and no other people taken instead of us, by whom thy name may be glorified."

Ver. 19. Though thou hast fore broken us in the place of dragons] *Though thou hast crushed us down into the place of serpents;* i. e. under the earth, expressed afterwards by *the shadow of death*. It is explained by the 25th verse, where there is the same image of serpents. The Psalmist designs to express a hopeless and forlorn condition, as in the 22d verse. See *Isai. xxxiv. 13.; xxxv. 7.*

Ver. 22. Yea, for thy sake are we killed] i. e. As professing thy religion, and not willing to have any intercommunity with the false gods of the heathen; for it is well known, that the Jews were exposed to a variety of evils from their conquerors, on account of their strict adherence to the Mosaic law. Houbigant observes, that as this and the like passages in this Psalm may be applied primarily to the captive and persecuted Jews, so do they, in a secondary sense, refer to suffering Christians, and their persecutions from heathen and unbelieving adversaries; and accordingly St. Paul so accommodates the present verse, *Rom. viii. 36.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The church of God is the same in all ages, saved by the same blood, strengthened by the same grace, opposed by the same enemies, and expecting the same deliverances. Here we behold her prostrate under the feet of her enemies, but calling to mind former days, and hoping still in God.

1. In their distress the people of God look back to their fathers' mercies; the wonders that God had wrought of old, casting out the Canaanites before them, and giving them their land for an inheritance; and this not by any prowess or might of their own, but by such repeated miracles as convinced them of the hand from whence all their victories came, and of the great good-will of God therein manifested towards them. *Note;* Not by human power, but divine, was the glorious gospel of Jesus made at first triumphant over the powers of darkness and heathenism: and he who once made bare his arm to plant, will not fail to preserve it; and every anti-christian foe, however tyrannous and persecuting, shall fall at last before it.

2. They profess their confidence in God for present salvation, and join their prayers that he would complete it in his time. God is their king, therefore he will protect his faithful subjects: renouncing all human confidences, they rest their cause with him, to tread down their enemies, and cover them with shame; knowing that it is but for him to speak, and the work is done: *Command deliverances for Jacob;* deliverances of all kinds, spiritual, temporal, eternal, from men, devils, sin, and death. *Note;* (1.) While we pray for ourselves as individuals, the church of Christ, and especially the persecuted members of it, should ever be remembered by us. (2.) They who would prevail against their spiritual enemies, must first renounce themselves, that God may be glorified. *When I am weak, then am I strong.*

3. They boast themselves in God, not in themselves, unless

23 Awake, why sleepest thou, O LORD? arise, cast us not off for ever.

24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?

25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.

26 Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercy's sake.

P S A L. XLV.

The majesty and grace of Christ's kingdom. The duty of the church, and the benefits thereof.

To the chief musician upon Shothannim, for the sons of Korah, Maschil. A Song of Loves.

MY heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

unless they glory in their infirmities, that the power and grace of God may more abundantly appear: God is their glory and praise. *Note;* The work of eternity will be everlasting praise; when with unutterable transport the golden crowns of the faithful redeemed shall be cast at the Redeemer's feet, and all their great salvation ascribed to his power, grace, and love.

2dly, We have the deep complaints of the persecuted church of God: to the eye of sense they seemed cast off, disowned, and dishonoured. *Note;* (1.) Reproach and sufferings are more or less our appointed crosses; let us not shrink under them. (2.) Though we may foolishly wonder why God permits his foes and ours to trample on his people, we shall know hereafter, and admire the dispensation. (3.) The dishonour cast upon God, is a greater grief to the spirit of the Christian than the injury done himself.

3dly, "Lord, to whom shall we go," may the church and every suffering member well say, "but unto thee?" for there is salvation in no other: hither therefore they fly, and,

1. Plead their own steady adherence to God's pure word and worship, amidst all the evils that they endured for the sake of them; and for this they appealed to the heart-searching God: they neither could be compelled to worship the gods of the heathen, nor the strange idol images of antichristian invention; no, not though fire and rack were the instruments of their torture, and dark prisons, inquisitorial dungeons, and every hellish device, had been used to shake their constancy: they loved not their lives unto death, and rather chose to be butchered all the day long, than comply with these abominations; their heart cleaved to Christ and his truth, and therefore faithfully endured his cross, and continued steadfast in his covenant. *Note;* (1.) Though we are not called to the sufferings of martyrs, we shall have that cross which nothing but Almighty grace can enable us to endure. (2.) They who, to shun troubles, comply with sin, only exchange the sufferings of time for the torments of eternity. (3.) When we have to deal with a heart-searching God, we may well tremble at the thought of insincerity.

2. They present their supplications for help and deliverance; and, with moving representations and expostulations, urge their suit. *Awake;* not that God sleeps; but, like one regardless of them, he seemed to have forsaken them; but they plead, let it not be for ever; *wherefore hidest thou thy face?* as though disregarding their affliction, when their souls were sunk in despondence, and their bodies made as the dung of the earth under the feet of their insulting

foes. *Arise;* they repeat the cry, their distress made them importunate; *redeem us for thy mercy's sake;* not because we have any desert to plead, but because of thy rich mercy in Christ, wherein thou hast caused us to put our trust. *Note;* (1.) If God seems to disregard our danger, as Jesus in the storm slept, it is only to awaken our importunity, and to magnify the more his mercy in our deliverance. (2.) The greatest saints of God have the lowest opinion of themselves: they, who could appeal to God for their simplicity, go forth with no other plea than his mercy.

P S A L. XLV.

Title. על שושנים *al Shoshannim.* Upon Shoshannim] Houbigant and others render it, upon the lilies; which seems to be the true meaning of the original word. Parkhurst observes, that Christ, the divine light, and true believers, who are the sons of light, and who are accordingly described as clothed in white, are emblematically represented by lilies: see Cant. ii. 1, 2. 16.; iv. 5.; vi. 1, 2. Hence may be explained the title of the present, the 69th, and the 80th Psalms, which Aquila constantly renders "To the giver of victory, concerning the lilies:" i. e. the emblematical lilies just mentioned. The version of the LXX, of על שושנים *al Shoshannim*, is, "Concerning those who are to be changed or transformed;" i. e. from corruption to incorruption, from dishonour to glory, from natural to spiritual. The title of the 60th Psalm is in the singular; על שושן *al Shoshan*, "concerning the lily;" i. e. the divine light, who is a banner to them that fear God, and is his right hand, by whom the beloved are "delivered." See Parkhurst's Lexicon on the word שושן *Shoshan*, and the remarks on the title of Pf. xxiii. It is further called a song of loves, which being in Hebrew שיר ידידות *Shir Iediduth*, may allude both to *Jedidiah*, the name given to Solomon by Nathan, 2 Sam. xii. 25. and likewise to the custom observed in the Jewish marriages, wherein the bride was encircled by young virgins, who sung a peculiar song or Psalm in honour of her espousals. Hence some render it, *A song of the beloved maids;—a song of the bride-maids;* and it has been thought that the Psalm was sung on the marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter; though unquestionably, like the Book of Canticles, it has a much higher reference. Most interpreters, says Bishop Patrick, conclude that it was composed upon the occasion, at least, of Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter; who, it is most likely, was a profelyte to the Jewish religion. Some few indeed will not allow so much as this, or that there is any respect to Solomon at all in this Psalm, but only to Christ: and the truth is, many of the expressions

2 Thou art fairer than the children of men : grace is poured into thy lips : therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

3 Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness ;

and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

5 Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the king's enemies ; *whereby* the people fall under thee.

6 Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever : the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre.

expressions in it are so magnificent, that they can but in a very poor and low sense be applied to Solomon and his bride ; and some of them scarcely at all. It being so apparent, no Christian can deny it, that the mind of the prophet, while he was writing some part of this Psalm, was carried quite beyond king Solomon, to the great King, the LORD CHRIST : or, at least, he was guided to use words so high, that they proved too big for Solomon ; and we must say, as our Saviour did in another case, BEHOLD ! A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE ! This the best of the Jewish interpreters acknowledge, particularly Kimchi, Aben-ezra, and Solomon Jarchi.

Ver. 1. My heart is inditing a good matter] The word *שחר* *rachash*, rendered *inditing*, signifies *boiling or bubbling up* ; and is here used metaphorically for deeply meditating with fervour and vehemency, in allusion either to water boiled over a fire, or else springing forth from a fountain. *The King*, means either primarily Solomon, or more properly the Messiah. *My tongue is the pen*, &c. as if he had said, " I will recite what I have composed with so much fluency, as shall equal the style of the most skilful and diligent writer." Green transposes the clauses in this verse ; making the words, *I speak of the things*, &c. the last clause ; because, says he, the address follows in the very next words. He renders it, *I will address my work unto the king*.

Ver. 2. Grace is poured into thy lips] Hebrew, *Grace is poured upon thy lips*. The former part of the verse describes the beauty of the king's person ; this, his eloquence and gracefulness of address. In this sense Solomon uses these words, Prov. xxii. 11. *The king is a friend to the grace of lips* ; i. e. to eloquence of speech and graceful address ; and in Eccles. x. 12. *The words of a wise man's mouth are said to be grace* ; i. e. graceful and eloquent. *Grace is poured*, is used here in the same sense in which Milton uses it, Book iv. ver. 364.

Such grace

The hand that form'd them on their shape hath pour'd.

Perhaps we cannot have a better comment upon this period than Raphael's description of Adam, in the same author, Book viii. ver. 218.

Nor are thy lips ungraceful, fire of men,
Nor tongue ineloquent ; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also pour'd,
Inward and outward both, his image fair ;
Speaking or mute, all comeliness and grace
Attends thee, and each word each motion forms.

Such was the eloquence of Solomon, that when the queen of Sheba, who came from the uttermost parts of the earth, to hear him, had been witness of the wisdom with which he spoke, *There was no more spirit in her*, nor was he less

remarkable for the elegance of his person : and such was the eloquence and graceful address of our Lord, that even the Nazarites, the most prejudiced of his enemies, could not help *wondering at the graceful words which proceeded out of his mouth* ; nor could the officers who were sent by the Jewish Sanhedrin to take him, find in their hearts to execute their commission ; because, *never man*, said they, *spake like this man*. We may just observe, that the prophet Isaiah, lii. 14. ; liii. 2. represents the Messiah as *having no form or comeliness* ; but this relates chiefly to the scandal of his cross ; though it may also refer to his countenance, which, before his death, had been wasted and disfigured by fasting and weariness, by painfulness and sorrow ; *his visage being marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men*. But the words of the Psalmist principally relate to that internal beauty, which in the prophecy of Ezekiel is called *The beauty of wisdom*, chap. xxviii. 7. or to that glory which men beheld when Christ was manifested in the flesh, *even the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father*. See Isai. i. 4. ; Luke, ii. 52. Instead of *therefore God*, in the last clause, some read, *because God*.

Ver. 3. Gird thy sword, &c.] This is meant of Christ's coming victoriously to set up his spiritual kingdom in our hearts, and to rule and reign in them by the power of his grace ; in allusion to earthly potentates, who are invested with the ensigns of majesty, and girded with their proper armour when they go forth to battle. But the *sword with which Christ was armed*, was the sword of the Spirit, *which is the word of God*. Bishop Hare renders the verse, *Gird thee with thy sword on thy thigh, O powerful One : thy glory and thy renown are for ever*.

Ver. 4. Ride prosperously] i. e. " Go forth, like a great conqueror, (see Rev. xix. 11.) not to enslave men's persons, or to spoil their goods ; but to settle the true faith among them, and to make them humble and meek, just and merciful." *Thy right hand, &c.* means, " Thy mighty power shall instruct thee to do miraculous and amazing works." See Luke, iv. 36 ; v. 26. Green renders this verse, *Ride on successfully in the cause of truth, righteousness, and meekness ; and let thy right hand direct thee to do formidable things : and others, And in thy majesty prosper thou : ride for the cause of truth, &c.*

Ver. 5. Thine arrows are sharp, &c.] *Thine arrows are sharp ; people shall fall under thee, in the midst of the king's enemies*. Or, *Thy sharp arrows shall level the people under thee ; they shall fall into the heart of the king's enemies*. Houbigant. The allusion to an earthly conqueror is still continued. The meaning is, " Thy word shall pierce like sharp arrows into the hearts of all who oppose thee, and make all nations humble themselves and become subject to thee."

Ver.

7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

8 All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

9 Kings' daughters *were* among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he *is* thy Lord; and worship thou him.

12 And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift; *even* the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.

13 The king's daughter *is* all glorious within: her clothing *is* of wrought gold.

14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

Ver. 6. Thy throne, O God, &c.] In Hebrews, i. 8. this verse is immediately applied to Christ. The word here rendered *God*, is אֱלֹהִים *elohim*, in the plural; concerning which, see the note on the 1st verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis. In agreement with this verse, St. Paul says of him, that *He is over all, God blessed for ever*, Rom. ix. 5. and we are told, Luke, i. 33. that *of his kingdom there shall be no end. The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre; i. e. "His laws are all righteous and good."* It is translated by Houbigant and others, *A sceptre of equity.*

Ver. 7. Thy God hath anointed thee] Christ is emphatically, *The Anointed*; Luke, iv. 18.; Acts, x. 38. Kings, priests, and prophets, were anointed when they entered upon their several offices. Christ was anointed of the Father, solemnly appointed to be the prophet, priest, and king of his people; but it is the regal dignity which is here chiefly referred to, with which (as man) he was not fully invested till after his resurrection, and exaltation to his throne in heaven. *Gladness*, means such as is remarkable at the coronation of kings, or rather infinitely beyond it. *Thy fellows*, must mean either other prophets, priests, and kings, or the faithful in general, who also have an unction from the Holy One, and who are made *kings and priests unto God*. See 1 John, ii. 20.; Rev. i. 6.

Ver. 8. All thy garments smell of myrrh, &c.] The aloes commonly known in England, to be used by the practitioners in physic, is found to be far from a perfume. It may be proper, therefore, to observe, that there is a wood called *the wood of aloes*, of Syria, which is a prickly shrub, and which the perfumers make use of. See Prov. vii. 17. It was, perhaps, from not attending to this particular, that some have rendered the verse, *Myrrh, and cedar-oil, and cassia, are all thy garments, from the ivory palaces, wherein thou delightest*. Green, after Bishop Hare, &c. gives us the verse thus; *All thy garments, out of the ivory wardrobes perfumed with myrrh, aloes, and cassia, delight thee with their fragrance*. And Houbigant translates it, *myrrh, aloes, and cassia, all thy garments, from the ivory vessels, the vessels of thy anointing*; those from which the myrrh, &c. are taken. These perfumes are mentioned as emblematical of the virtues and graces of Christ; and of the knowledge of him, which was spread as a sweet odour in every place, when he went to espouse a church unto himself. See 2 Cor. ii. 14. 16.

VOL. III.

Ver. 9. Kings' daughters, &c.] *Kings' daughters were in thy magnificence*. Or, *Were among thy high-valued treasures*. Mudge. The prophet here represents the bride, whose marriage he celebrates, as attended by princesses. There is no need to speak of the literal propriety, if referring to Solomon. But in the spiritual sense, these images of a bride or a queen, and of her *honourable women*, (who, in the proper and literal sense, are persons really different,) are not to be so distinguished: as in the parable of the virgins, Matth. xxv. those who go before the bride, are not in the mystical sense different from the bride herself; since the church, who is the spouse of Christ, is no other than the faithful who compose the church: but the prophet in this Psalm, which is a continued parable, refers to the ceremonies observed in the marriages of kings; whose queens, richly clothed, are attended with a retinue of ladies of the first quality. Compare Rev. xxi. 9. 11.

Ver. 10—12. Hearken, O daughter, &c.] The prophet here addresses himself to the bride, that is, the church, ver. 13. *Thine own people, and thy father's house*, means, "the religion of the country in which thou wast educated, whether Gentile or Jewish." See Luke, xix. 26.; Ephes. v. 31, 32. "Thus shalt thou be amiable in the eyes of Christ, as being *a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*." The version of the Liturgy of the Church of England adds the word *God*:—*He is thy Lord God*; which is not in the Hebrew or the LXX. Bishop Hare concludes the 11th verse with these words, *for he is thy Lord*; and he translates the next verse thus, *And do thou, O daughter of Tyre, prostrate thyself before him with a present; let the rich also among thy people intreat his favour*. The meaning of which seems to be, that the Gentiles, even the richest and proudest of them, such as were the Tyrians, shall honour the church of Christ, and join themselves to it. This was verified of the Tyrians in particular, Mark, iii. 8.; vii. 4.; Acts, xxi. 3—5.

Ver. 13, 14. The king's daughter, &c.] The *king's daughter*, the church, is said to be *all glorious within*; that is, adorned with the most excellent graces and virtues. *Her clothing is of wrought gold*; i. e. those graces and virtues shall display themselves outwardly, and recommend themselves by the lustre of good works. See Matt. v. 16. and respecting the *companions of the church, and the rejoicing*, Rev. xiv. 4.; xix. 6, 7.; Acts, ii. 46, 47.

O

Ver.

15 With gladness and rejoicing *shall* they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

Ver. 16. Instead of thy fathers, &c.] i. e. "Instead of the patriarchs, of their descent from whom the Jews were apt to boast, shall be pastors and ecclesiastical rulers throughout the world, and, at length, the temporal princes and governors thereof shall own thee for their mother." Houbigant renders the last verse very properly, in my judgment, after the Chaldee, *They, that is, thy children, shall make thy name to be remembered.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, This Psalm is written especially concerning him who is the *lily of the valley*, and those faithful ones, who, by a marriage-union with him, partake of his beauty and fragrance. This is the epithalamium composed on this royal nuptial, *A song of loves*; the mutual love of Christ and his church; or, *of the beloved virgins*; sung by those faithful believers in honour of their august bridegroom, whose praise shall never cease from their lips, when in glory they shall follow the Lamb wherefoever he goeth.

The author introduces his bridal ode with a preface concerning the person. *My heart is inditing a good matter*; yea, the best subject that ever employed a poet's thought, the grace and glory of our Immanuel: *is inditing, or bubbling* as a fountain; his heart was big with the sacred theme, and ready to burst, like the fountain from its overflowing reservoir: deeply in thought he first digested and arranged the matter, then uttered his song. *I speak of the things which I have made touching the king*: Jesus is the grand object in his view, his person, grace, and government: *I speak*, not under the influence of mere poetic genius, but inspired by that eternal Spirit of truth and holiness, who dictates as I utter: *my tongue is the pen of a ready writer*; delight in the glorious subject gives freedom to the tongue, and fluency to the pen; and deeply may the song be engraven on every heart, and kindle still the sacred flame of love as it descends to latest ages! *Note*; They who know the excellence of Jesus, delight to think of him, speak of him, write of him; a sweet favour of Christ is in all their words and works, and this subject can never be exhausted to eternity.

2dly, We have a glorious description of the divine and adored Redeemer, appearing in the flesh for the salvation of the faithful, and the ruin of his enemies.

1. His beauty is described. *Thou art fairer than the children of men*: not considered in his uncreated beauty, nor, I apprehend, respecting his human form and countenance as man, but with regard to the transcendent excellencies which he possesses as Redeemer and Son of God, which render him *the chief of ten thousand, and altogether lovely*. Thus every faithful soul regards him as the grand object of his warmest affections; and, though he hath neither form nor comeliness to others, he can say, whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is nothing upon earth I desire in comparison of thee.

2. His words are as sweet and kind, as his person, as Mediator, is amiable. *Grace is poured into thy lips*; the

gospel of grace, which was delivered unto him, and which he declared to men, containing those rich and inestimable promises of pardon, grace, consolation, and glory, the report of which makes *his feet beautiful upon the mountains*.

3. The blessing of God is upon him for ever. It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, that out of the plenitude which he had received he might dispense to his faithful people according to their necessities, be their fountain of blessing, their *eternal excellence*, and *the joy of many generations*. Blessed and happy are they who out of *his fulness receive, and grace for grace*.

4. Victory attends his chariot-wheels: he comes to conquer his faithful people's enemies, and to rescue the prey from the mighty; first bringing them from slavery, then making them partners of his throne. The Psalmist addresses him, therefore, as ready to go forth to battle against the powers of darkness: *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty*; that sword of the Spirit, even the word of God; by the preaching and power of which, at last the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ: and in this warfare he appears *with glory and majesty*; not to the eye of sense; in that he was despicable; but they who regarded him as the only-begotten of the Father, beheld his glory; nor did his excellent majesty ever appear more distinguished than when covered with clotted gore, and streaming down with blood; *he spoiled on the cross principalities and powers, making a show of them openly. And in thy majesty ride prosperously*: this is the church's prayer, that he would go forth conquering and to conquer, and triumph in the heart of every believer, as he hath overcome for them; and this *because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness*; by means of these, by his word of *truth*, the promise which supported him in his sufferings; or the gospel, through which the saints overcome; because of *meekness*, either his own, which enabled him patiently to endure our punishment, or that which he works in his believing people under all their trials; because of *righteousness*, that which he hath wrought out in his own person; or that internal holiness of heart which he works in his people, whereby they are strengthened against all the temptations of sin and Satan: thus entering the lists, *thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things*; thy omnipotent arm shall prevail over all the combined powers of earth and hell. *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people shall fall under thee*; either those who, though once enemies, subdued by mighty grace, and pierced with deep conviction, fall down at the Redeemer's feet as humble supplicants for mercy; or those who, obstinately impenitent, and standing out against the warnings of his word, and the calls of his gospel, are broken under the rod of his judgments, and, pierced with the arrows of his eternal wrath, find it in vain to struggle with Omnipotence. *Note*; (1.) The sharpest convictions of sin are gracious wounds, designed not to destroy, but to recover us. (2.) When, by Divine Grace, the majestic Saviour takes possession of the heart, corruption must fall

17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

fall before his mighty sword. (3.) Wo to the sinner's soul against which the arrows of vengeance are ready on the string.

3dly, The Psalmist, having set forth the king Messiah victorious over his foes, here describes him on his exalted throne, in robes of majesty, and graced with most magnificent attendants.

1. His throne and righteous administration are remarked. *Thy throne, O God; no less a personage than the eternal Jehovah; not a creature of the highest rank, but the self-existent Creator, whom angels adore, and whose kingdom ruleth over all; and eternal as universal, for ever and ever: equitable in all his administrations, the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre; none shall have cause to complain. Thou lovest righteousness, or righteous persons; those who, under the influence of faith and love, walk after his own blessed pattern and precepts, and hatest wickedness of all sorts, and those who practise it; and will, in condign punishment, make his hatred of it appear to all eternity.*

2. The appointment of Christ to his mediatorial kingdom is observed. *Therefore God, even thy God, John, xx. 17. who appointed him for the work of redemption, and was the head of Christ and his God, as incarnate, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness; all spiritual gifts and graces, without measure, were bestowed upon the man Jesus, that he might be every way qualified for the undertaking whereunto he was appointed; and have in all things the pre-eminence in the surpassing excellence of his human nature, as well as in the transcendent dignity to which he was advanced above his fellows.*

3. His royal apparel is mentioned. *All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia; alluding to the ingredients of the holy oil, Exod. xxx. 23.*

4. His court appears magnificently splendid. *Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women; the children of God are sons and daughters of the eternal king, and their highest honour is to be attendants on his exalted Son; seeing that by him they obtain this glorious relation, becoming children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. And as particular believers, virgin souls of royal extraction, appear his attendants, his church sits as a queen at his right hand in gold of Ophir, adorned with gifts and graces more pure and precious than the finest gold. We may say of him, with infinitely greater propriety than the queen of Sheba did of Solomon's servants, Happy are they that stand continually before thee; for a greater than Solomon is here.*

4thly, As the former part related to the king, the latter particularly respects the queen, the Lamb's wife; and she is called daughter, either referring to her relation to God's dear Son, or as a term of tender and affectionate regard.

1. A solemn injunction is given her. *Hearken, consider, incline thine ear: thou art no longer thine own, thy husband's will must be thy law; hearken to it with attention, consider it with delight, and incline to it with cheerfulness; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; no attachment beside engage thy heart, for the whole*

belongs to him. They who would be Christ's spouse must be separated for him from whatever here below would ensnare and draw away their affections. *So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: this is an argument for her faithful adherence to him alone; the delight he would take in her, and the happiness thence resulting. Another is drawn from his right and authority over her: He is thy Lord; thy master, to whom obedience is so highly due; and therefore worship thou him, as thy maker, as well as thy husband and thy Redeemer, who is most high in the glory of God the Father, equal as touching his godhead, and therefore to be adored with equal honour. Note; (1.) We cannot entertain too high thoughts of the glory of our divine Lord: the humiliation of the man must never lessen in our eye the essential deity of the Son. (2.) None can call Christ their bridegroom, whose fidelity and love do not evidence the truth of their relation. (3.) The Lord's delight is those who love and serve him; no beauty in his eye like the beauty of holiness.*

2. The conversion of the Gentiles under her is foretold. *The daughter of Tyre, the nearest bordering heathen nation, shall be there with a gift, offering up herself and her goods for the support of the Gospel; even the rich among the people; not only the lower ranks in life, but even kings shall intreat thy favour; desire to be admitted into the communion and fellowship of the Gospel, which in a measure has been, and yet shall be, more eminently fulfilled in its season.*

3. Her beautiful apparel and admission into her husband's palace are observed. *The king's daughter is all glorious within; her soul is adorned with every divine and gracious disposition; her clothing is of wrought gold; a shining profession, and exemplary conduct, mark all her steps. She shall be brought unto the king, conducted by the hand of grace, and prepared for her high estate, in raiment of needlework, in the richest garments of humility, purity, and love: the virgins her companions; the souls preserved in purity, unspotted from the world, that follow her in all holy ordinances and godly conversation, shall be brought unto thee, to the eternal enjoyment of thy presence and love. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, amid congratulating angels, themselves lost in wonder, gratitude, and praise; and no marvel! when they shall enter into the king's palace; the heaven of heavens, the place where his throne of glory stands; and where, next to his own, thrones are prepared for them, that they may reign with him eternally. May my poor soul be numbered among these virgin fellows!*

4. The progeny of the Redeemer is promised to be many and illustrious. *Instead of thy fathers, the Jewish stock from whence he sprung, shall be thy children, of the Gentile world; whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth; for his dominion shall be from sea to sea; the very isles of the Gentiles shall come in unto him: and from all these nations he shall have a faithful people to reign with him as kings and priests for ever. In consequence of this spread of the Gospel, the Father engages to make his memorial everlasting. I will make thy name to be remembered in*

P S A L. XLVI.

The confidence which the church hath in God. An exhortation to behold it.

To the chief musician, for the sons of Korah: A Song upon Alamoth.

GOD is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 *Though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not

be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.

6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

7 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariots in the 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 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

all generations, by maintaining a perpetual succession of faithful men: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever: while the sun and the moon endureth, there shall be a church to praise him; and when these bright luminaries are extinguished, the praises of our Jesus shall continue the burden of the never-ceasing song of eternity. Amen, and Amen.

P S A L. XLVI.

Title. למנצח לבני קרח על עלמות שיר *lamnatseach libnei korach al alamoth sbir.*] This Psalm is thought to have been composed by David upon his conquest over the Philistines and Moabites, 2 Sam. viii. 1, 2. The style is lofty, and seems every way worthy of that Royal Author: With great force of expression he compares the powerful fury and terror of his enemies to that of an earthquake, or to the threatening horrors of a tempestuous sea. The word עלמות *Alamoth* is translated by some the virgins, and by others things secret: and, accordingly, it is on one hand supposed either to refer to some tune then in common use, or some musical instrument unknown to us, which was peculiarly adapted to the virgins who sung in the choir; 1 Chron. xv. 20.; and, on the other hand, it is thought to refer to the secret and hidden mysteries of the Gospel. See Fenwick on the title of the 9th Psalm. The Chaldee title runs thus: "A hymn of praise for the sons of Korah, in the spirit of prophesy, when their father was bidden from them; nevertheless, they were delivered, and sung this hymn." The Syriac adds, "Taken in its prophetic sense, it alludes to the preaching of the apostles."

Ver. 3. *Though the waters thereof roar*] We have before observed, that it is familiar with David to consider a vast host of the enemy under the idea of a flood of waters; a noble instance of which we have in this verse: and I should only beg leave to add David's own comment upon it, as one of the finest instances of the sublime which the imagination can conceive, ver. 6. *The heathen raged;—*

the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice:—the earth melted. Delaney, Life of David, b. iii. chap. 3.

Ver. 4. *There is a river, the streams whereof, &c.*] Or, as some render it, *The river by its streams, &c.* But the version of the Liturgy is nearer the Hebrew: *The rivers of the flood thereof shall make glad the city of our God; the holy place, &c.* i. e. "The rivers, which sweep all other fenced cities before them, shall be so far from hurting us, that they shall make glad the city of our God; they shall be the occasion of great joy to us upon our victory over our enemies, &c." The Psalmist appears to have been warmed with a grateful sense of their late deliverance, so that his imagination rises from one thing to another. His trust in God was so steady, that he exhorts his subjects not to fear, though all other nations should be in confusion; though their enemies, like the sea, should rage and swell, and threaten them most violently; nay, though they should destroy all other fortified places at pleasure: for, though the rivers of that flood of ungodly men should set all their forces against Jerusalem, they should be so far from succeeding, that he assures them, the effect of that attempt should only be to furnish matter of joy and triumph for them. The LXX seem to have taken it in this sense, who translate it, *the forces, or vehemence of the river;* and the Ethiopic version, *the river which runs rapidly.* Bishop Patrick understands it differently, and paraphrases it thus: "Our hearts shall be quiet and still, like the river which runs through our city." And Piscator, Hammond, and others, speak much to the same purpose; who mention the brook *Gibon*, which waters Jerusalem, and the streams of *Silva*, which flow softly.

Ver. 5. *And that right early*] *At the appearing of the morning.* Houbigant, &c. As soon as the morning shows its face. i. e. "God will come very early to her succour, before any enemy is awakened to annoy her."

Ver. 9. *He maketh wars to cease, &c.*] *He hath destroyed the artillery of war, to the end of the earth, or the land.*

P S A L. XLVII.

The nations are exhorted cheerfully to entertain the kingdom of Christ.

To the chief musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

O CLAP your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

2 For the LORD most High is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth.

3 He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

4 He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.

5 God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

land. Comp. Ps. lxxvi. 3. He destroyed the whole apparatus and furniture of war, so that there was none left in all the country. Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that this Psalm was written in consequence of David's victory over Hadadezer, and that it may be clearly inferred from this verse, *He breaketh the bow, &c.* See 2 Sam. viii. 4.

Ver. 10. *Be still, and know, &c.*] The Psalmist here represents God as speaking with a majesty becoming him; immediately after which, he congratulates his subjects upon their having this great God for their deliverer. His imagination was so rapid, that it would not suffer him to connect his expressions, but he, as it were, felicitates himself and his people, and breaks forth into the triumphal expression, *The Lord of hosts is with us, &c.* leaving them to infer, and make the proper use of the expression.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Amid the furious attacks of enraged foes, the name of our God is a strong tower, into which the righteous runneth and is safe. We have here David professing his own and the church's confidence in God, amid the most threatening appearances, and giving his reasons for such his hope.

1. They are safe amid all the tumults of this disordered world. *God is our refuge, who shall pluck us thence? our strength, who shall be able to stand before us thus supported? a very present help in trouble, to extricate from every difficulty, and very near to succour and save us. Therefore will not we fear; there is no shadow of ground for it, seeing that he who is for us is most High, so infinitely surpassing in power all who are against us: And in the midst of her, his church, taking up his residence, and manifesting his presence in the believer's heart. In vain, therefore, the earth trembles and is dissolved, the mountains leap from their bases, the stormy billows roar and lash the rocky shores; in vain are all the attacks; in vain the threatenings of earth or hell; the church, and every faithful soul, is founded on a rock; not only safe from ruin, but secure from every terrifying fear; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and make her adversaries lick the dust, and that right early; quickly, or when the morning appears; the night of trouble shall be short, and the welcome morning of deliverance and joy arise.* *Note;* (1.) When danger is most alarming, faith should be most in exercise. (2.) The changes and revolutions of this sublunary globe, can little affect those whose souls are fixed on things above. (3.) They need not fear, and shall not fall, who make God their refuge and strength.

2. They are comforted as well as secure. *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God:*

a river of never-ceasing consolations, whose streams no foe can interrupt; these, like the waters of Siloa, sweetly flow into the faithful soul in the midst of every trial, and fill him with joy as well as peace in believing; he is the city where God delights to dwell, and *the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High*, being made the habitation of God through the Spirit. *Note;* If we enjoy divine communications of grace and comfort, we are amply repaid for all the storms and tempests raised by a world which lieth in wickedness.

2dly, Who can stand when God appeareth?

1. His foes are routed and destroyed. *The heathen raged against his church and people; of old, Rome pagan, and, of later days, Rome papal, and all the antichristian enemies of his children; and the kingdoms were moved, stirred up to war against the saints of the most High: but he uttered his voice, and at the breath of his lips the earth melted; all these collected forces dissolved as the snow before the sun.* Thus, under the wings of Jacob's God, the God of hosts, we are not only protected, but by his power triumphant. *Come, behold the works of the Lord, with wonder see his glorious interposition, what desolations he hath made in the earth upon all his furious adversaries: the desolations of Judæa, the downfall of the Roman monarchy, mark his avenging rod: and from these we may be assured the present powers of Antichrist, whether popish or mahomedan, shall alike, with their carcases, strew the ground; nor will he cease till all his enemies are made his footstool; when, their power utterly broken, and all their armour, wherein they trusted, spoiled, and consumed, the war shall cease, and his people enjoy for ever the fruits of that glorious and eternal peace which he hath obtained for them. For,*

2. They are bid only to *be still*, to wait upon the Lord, without distraction, *and know that I am God; believe my power and love, and ye shall assuredly see my great salvation; and that displayed not more for their comfort and safety, than for his own glory: I will be exalted among the heathen, who oppose his kingdom and interests, by their destruction; I will be exalted in the earth, by subduing the nations of the world to the obedience of the faith, and setting up the throne of the Redeemer from pole to pole.* Such promises may therefore well silence all our fears, and confirm our confidence. *The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

P S A L. XLVII.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ לְבְנֵי קֹרַח מִזְמוֹר lamna'seach lilnei korach mizmor.] This psalm, says Bishop Patrick, is thought by some to have been composed by David, when he translated the ark to mount Zion: Others think that it was composed by some of the sons of Korah, when the ark was brought from

Mount

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

7 For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.

8 God reigneth over the heathen: God

sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

9 The princes of the people are gathered together, *even* the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth *belong* unto God: he is greatly exalted.

mount Sion to Solomon's temple. The psalm, however, is supposed to have a higher sense; for, as the ark was a figure of Christ, and mount Sion of the heavens, the translation or carrying back of the ark thither may be looked upon as a figure of Christ's ascension into the high and holy place.

Ver. 2. The Lord most high is terrible] *Is to be feared—to be revered—to be held in awe.* Fenwick, Mudge, &c.

Ver. 3. He shall subdue, &c.] The inspired author of the psalm takes occasion to praise God for calling the Gentiles in the time of the Messiah, which, by the Holy Spirit, was then revealed to him. As if he had said, "He, this great God, who is to be revered by all people, to whom all knees shall bow, who is constituted and appointed King over all the earth, he shall render all the nations of the world subject to the rules which shall be delivered under his authority by persons of our country; from whence his all-subduing law shall go forth."

Ver. 4. He shall choose our inheritance] "He shall make us to dwell safely in this good land of Canaan, which he hath given us; and which is a type of that heavenly country, to which both Jews and Gentiles shall at length be translated."

Ver. 5. God is gone up with a shout] That is, primarily, the ark, which is the precious token of God's presence, is joyfully carried into the holy place; and, secondarily, it is a song of praise for the exaltation of the King of Glory into heaven.

Ver. 9. The princes of the people are gathered] *The princes of the nations are incorporated with the God of Abraham*; Mudge: with whom almost all the ancient versions and more modern translators agree. The version of the liturgy is, *The princes of the people are joined to the people of the God of Abraham.* *The princes of the people*, means the heads of the tribes: *are gathered together*, namely, at this solemn festival, without any fear of invasion from the neighbouring nations: since God hath undertaken their protection, while they have left their own houses unguarded, to attend his service. See Exod. xxiv. 23. 25. But in the prophetic sense, which seems the most proper, *the princes of the people*, means the heathen princes, who were to be converted to Christianity, and to join themselves to the people of the God of Abraham; that is, to the Jewish converts under the dominion of Christ. *The shields* means the sovereignty of the whole earth: *for God takes to him the shields of the earth*; all the princes of it, under his own immediate government. Pf. lxxxix. 19. *King and shield* are here, as in other places, synonymous. See Pf. lxxxiv. 9.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The psalm opens with an address to all people to express their utmost exultation in God, the great fountain of salvation.

O clap your hands, all ye people, not only of the Jewish nation, but those who are saved by Jesus out of all lands:

shout unto God with the voice of triumph, not merely for Israel's enemies subdued by David's sword, but for the more glorious victories which the Son of David hath obtained over all the powers of sin, death, and hell: *for the Lord most High*, the incarnate Saviour, whose name is above every name in heaven or earth; *he is terrible* in his judgments, when, turning upon his affrighted foes, confusion covers them, and ruin overtakes them: *he is King over all the earth*, his dominion sovereign and universal; his people, therefore, may well be joyful in their king. *He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet*; by the powerful influences of his word and Spirit, either effectually converting the Gentiles to himself, and bringing them to the obedience of the faith, or casting down with his mighty arm the refractory and impenitent. *He shall choose our inheritance for us*, not Canaan's fertile land, but a better and more enduring portion shall he provide for the faithful, even one that is eternal in the heavens, which his blood hath bought, his promise hath secured, and himself is gone up to prepare for them, *the excellency of Jacob*, the spiritual Israel of God. *Note*; (1.) They who believe the promises, cannot but rejoice in hope. (2.) Jesus is a terrible enemy, but a most desirable friend: happy they, who, fleeing from the wrath to come, find favour and reconciliation with him. (3.) Heaven is the inheritance of the faithful; where then should our affections be?

2dly, If this moment we begin the song, and ceaseless continue it through the days of eternity, we cannot shew forth all the Redeemer's praise; yet the attempt is gratitude, and the service our bounden duty. We have here several subjects of praise pointed out.

1. For the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of God. It might be matter of national joy, when the ark, restored from obscurity, was carried in grand procession to the tabernacle of David; but this is an universal burst of praise; earth rings with the glory of the ascending Saviour, while angels catch the mighty joy, and, opening their shining ranks, receive with a shout of triumph the returning conqueror, who leads captivity captive.

2. For his universal sovereignty. High on his exalted throne the Redeemer sits, as God over all, blessed for ever; as king, ruling by his providence in all the earth, protecting his believing people, restraining the heathen, and making his holiness appear in all his administration; and therefore demanding praise, *with understanding*, such as becomes him, or from every *intelligent being*, who are all bound to set forth his glory.

3. For the conversion of the Gentiles. *The princes of the people are gathered together*, to tender their submission at the feet of Jesus, *even the people of the God of Abraham*, for such by faith they become; followers of the patriarch, and sharers in his blessing; or, *to the people*, &c. intimating their union in one body, under Jesus, their exalted head: *for the shields of the earth*, the rulers of the nations, *belong unto*

P S A L. XLVIII.

The ornaments and privileges of the church.

A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah.

GREAT is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

4 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.

5 They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.

6 Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.

7 Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.

8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

9 We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

10 According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.

11 Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.

12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.

13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider

unto God, are appointed by him, and their hearts are in his hand. *He is greatly exalted*; all power is given him in heaven and in earth, and his dominion eternal as universal: *therefore sing praises unto our God, sing praises: sing praises to our King, sing praises!*

P S A L. XLVIII.

Title. שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְבְנֵי קֹרַח *Sbiir mizmor libnei korach.*] This is a triumphant hymn, the author of which is not known, nor the particular time when it was composed. It appears from the contents of it, that it was made upon some providential deliverance which God had given to the city of Jerusalem, when it was violently attacked, or threatened at least, by some very powerful and confederate enemies. Mudge thinks that it refers to the ineffectual attempt of Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel: *Isai. vii. 1.* and that the prophecy of *Isaiah*, in that and the succeeding chapter, confirms this idea. See also the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses. But an anonymous writer well observes, that mount Zion is the main subject of the poem, which was not much regarded after the ark had been some time removed from thence; whereas, at the time this psalm was made, it was evidently in its highest reputation; whence it is probable, that the psalm is as old as David's time. The LXX, Vulgate, and Arabic, subjoin the words, "on one of their sabbaths," or "on the second sabbath," to the title: by which they would insinuate, that the use of this psalm was to be appropriated to the sabbath: for indeed some of the psalms were peculiar to the service on week-days, and others set apart for the public solemnities, and the sabbath, on which only they were to be used.

Ver. 2. Beautiful for situation, &c.] The expression of mount Zion's being *the joy of the whole earth*, seems to allude to the promise made to the patriarch, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And the law, the Christian law, may be said literally to have gone out from mount Zion into all lands. *On the sides of the north, or north side [lies] the city of the great king*, means the city of Jerusalem. It may be asked, why this circumstance is

mentioned as an encomium upon the hill of Sion, that Jerusalem lay on the north of it: The answer is, that it is mentioned as a proof of its greater security; for the hill of Sion was almost inaccessible on any other side, than towards the north; and here it was defended by Jerusalem, which was exceedingly strong: But though the psalmist mentions this as a material circumstance, he shews that it was not in the strength of it that he confided, but in the presence and protection of God; *God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*

Ver. 7. Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish, &c.] Or, *like the east wind, which in a moment dasheth in pieces the ships of Tarshish.* Green. I have added, says he, *in a moment*, because the east wind in those parts is remarkably violent, (comp. *Job, xxvii. 21. Jer. xviii. 17. Isai. xxvii. 8. Hab. i. 9.*) and because it more easily conveys to the reader in what point of comparison it lies; namely, in the suddenness of the king's being seized with trembling and fear.

Ver. 9. We have thought of thy loving-kindness.] *We were waiting for thy loving-kindness.* Green.

Ver. 10. Thy right hand, &c.] *Righteousness consecrates thee.*

Ver. 11-13. Let mount Zion rejoice, &c.] Dr. Delaney thinks that these verses allude to the great improvements made at Jerusalem, the temple on mount Moriah, Millo, the house of the forest of Lebanon, the palace of Pharaoh's daughter, and that of Solomon, &c. See *b. ii. c. 8.* Green renders the 11th verse, *When the daughter of Sion heard, she rejoiced; the daughters of Judah were transported with joy because of thy judgments.* Mudge thinks that the three first verses of this psalm were insultingly thrown out upon the kings who had come up against Jerusalem, and had gone round her to reconnoitre her strength, in order to take her, but were now fled away; calling upon them to return and go round her again, and see now entire her fortifications were; and bidding them tell the next generation, that it would be in vain to attempt any thing against her, while she had Jehovah for her protector. "Tell the next generation that this God is our God; He will be our guide" for

her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

14 For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide *even* unto death.

P S A L. XLIX.

An earnest persuasion to build the faith of the resurrection, not on worldly power, but on God. Worldly prosperity is not to be admired.

To the chief musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

HEAR this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:

“for ever and ever:” For Bishop Hare seems to have proved, beyond doubt, that עַל נֵינֹת *al nut*, rendered *unto death*, should be rendered one word, and make part of the title of the following psalm, being the same word which is rendered *almah* in the title of Psalm xlii. Fenwick, however, thinks that there is no need of any correction, the sacred writer meaning, “God will lead us as conquerors, and enable us to triumph over death.”

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The work of heaven will be everlasting praise; it is good to antedate the joy.

1. *Great is the Lord*, who in his mediatorial glory is so highly exalted, and greatly to be praised for all his wonderful works of power, grace, and love, manifested in all ages to his faithful people: and this his glory is to be set forth,

2. *In the city of our God*, in Jerusalem, the mountain of his holiness, in Zion, where, in his temple, his sacred presence dwelt between the cherubims: *Beautiful for situation*, eminent to view, and the country around it like the garden of Eden: *the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion*, being the favoured residence of the God of the whole earth, on the sides of the north, turned from the sultry beam of day, the city of the great King, where most eminently he fixes his throne, and manifests his glory. *God is known in her palaces for a refuge*, having protected it from every foe; and all who come to worship there find safety under his wings. Thus glorious was the earthly Jerusalem, but how much in glory does the spiritual Zion exceed her. In his church the great Redeemer is pleased to dwell now; bright in holiness she shines, and filled with inhabitants as a city: in beauty excellent, watered with the streams of grace, which flow from the fountain of blessedness, adorned with living palaces, the residence of the eternal Spirit: here a sure refuge is found in the arms of Jesus from guilt and sin, known by the word of his gospel, and proved by the experience of every faithful soul.

3. All attempts of foes to hurt are fruitless, where God is thus known and praised. This Jerusalem had experienced. The assembled kings passed by, they saw Almighty Power engaged to protect her, and with astonishment fled; a panic fear seized them, they were dashed in pieces by the stormy wind: and such will be the issue of the war against the church of God carried on by the antichristian foes, Rev. xix. 19—21. They will fall before the power of Jesus, be overthrown with perpetual desolations, and sink as a stone in the mighty waters of God's wrath, and never rise up again.

2 Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

4 I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about.

6 They that trust in their wealth, and

ally, We have the church of God declaring by experience the truth of what the Psalmist had asserted. *As we have heard*, either in former ages when God vouchsafed such mighty aid, or in the word of promise, *so have we seen* the accomplishment of the promise, and the like protection, *in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God*; Jerusalem bore testimony to God's faithfulness and care then, and in like manner may the people of God in every age increase the number of witnesses. *God will establish it for ever*; the gates of hell shall never prevail over the faithful children of God; but finally they shall triumph over all their enemies. *We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God*, from whence all his rich mercy springs, or waited for it, when dangers seemed to threaten, *in the midst of thy temple*, thy church, where in prayer we called upon thee, and with praises celebrated thy faithfulness. *According to thy name, thy boundless perfections, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth*, whither the glorious gospel has carried the discovery of that blessed name, the Lord our Redeemer and Saviour. *Thy right hand is full of righteousness*, every decision of his is equitable; and especially what seems here intended, the doom reserved for the opposers of God's truth and kingdom is altogether righteous. And herein let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad; all true believers, because of thy judgments, which shall be executed on the powers of Antichrist in the great day of retribution. And in the mean time, *walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof*. Jerusalem was regarded as an impregnable fortress; but stronger towers of angelic guards keep safe the spiritual Zion. *Mark well her bulwarks*, built on Christ, the rock of ages, defended by the arm of Omnipotence; *consider her palaces*, such as are the prophets, apostles, confessors, and faithful in every age, that ye may tell it to the generation following, for the support of their faith and hope in every exigence. *For this God is our God for ever and ever*, the same powerful protector, the same gracious and loving Saviour to all who trust in him. *He will be our guide*, the guide of the faithful, safely to preserve them from all the dangers of life; in death, to keep them from all fear or failing; and after death, to bring them to the eternal enjoyment of his blessed self. May we prove him such by happy experience!

P S A L. XLIX.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ לְבָנֵי קֶרַח מִזְמוֹר *lamnatseach libnei korach mizmor.*] The author of this psalm is not known, nor the particular occasion of it. But it seems to be a meditation on the vanity of riches, and the usual haughtiness of those

boast themselves in the multitude of their riches ;

7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.

8 (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever :)

9 That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.

10 For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

11 Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations ; they call their lands after their own names.

12 Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not : he is like the beasts that perish.

13 This their way is their folly : yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave ; death shall feed on them ; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning ;

those who possess them : As a remedy for this, it sets before them the near prospect of death, from which no riches can save, in which no riches can avail. The author considers the subjects he is treating, as a kind of wisdom concealed from the world, a mystery, an occult science, with respect to the generality of mankind.

Ver. 4. *I will incline mine ear to a parable, &c.*] Much of the eastern wisdom consisted in the understanding of parables, and in the interpretation of dark sayings or riddles: the mysterious cover to this kind of wisdom made it the most high-priced accomplishment ; and here, when the Psalmist was to raise and engage the attention of his audience, he promises that he would speak of those things in which the highest wisdom was supposed to consist. He says, he will *incline his ear to a parable*, and will *open his dark saying upon the harp* : And indeed, it must be confessed, that in the composition of this psalm, he has made use of every art to render it worthy the subject. See Warburton's Divine Legation, and Numb. xxi. 27.—*I will incline or stoop mine ear*, refers to the practice of musicians when they tune their instruments, stooping down and listening attentively to the sound.

Ver. 5. *Wherefore should I fear, &c.*] *Wherefore should I fear in the days of adversity, when the iniquity of those who lie in wait for me, surrounds me?* Bishop Hare. Houbigant renders the last clause, *Because trouble surrounds me*. The iniquity of my heels, is agreeable to the Hebrew ; but the meaning seems to be what the versions above have assigned ; “The iniquity of those unjust persons who are at my heels, and are ready to supplant and destroy me.”

Ver. 6—8. *They that trust in their wealth, &c.*] Some translate it, *Confident men boast themselves in their wealth, and in the multitude of their riches*: ver. 7. *One cannot by any means redeem the other, nor afford any ransom to God for him*: ver. 8. *For it is of high price to purchase any one's life, that he should subsist for ever*. Mr. Mudge's version of this passage is, ver. 6. *They that trust on their substance, and boast in the abundance of their riches* ; ver. 7. *Not one can, in truth, redeem his brother, nor give to God his ransom*: ver. 8. *(For the ransom of their life is of too high a value, and he is extinct for ever)*: ver. 9. *So that he should live on continually, and not see the pit*. Houbigant renders the 8th and 9th verses thus: ver. 8. *For the redemption of their soul is precious*: ver. 9. *But he who ceaseth in this world, shall yet live; though he see the pit, he shall not see it for ever*. This he supposes to contain the parable or dark saying mentioned in the 4th verse;

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and the Psalmist, says he, on account of this hope of immortality set before man, condemns him for his inattention to this immortality, for limiting all his hopes to the present state of existence, and so becoming like the beasts that perish.

Ver. 10. *For he seeth that wise men die*] *For he seeth the wise die; as well as the fool and stupid, they perish, &c.* As much as to say, “If riches could save at all from death, they would do it when in the hands of wise men: but they do not; for they die alike, the wise man and the fool; the former can make no more use of them than the latter.” Mudge.

Ver. 11. *Their inward thought, &c.*] *Their sepulchre is their dwelling for ever; their abode to all generations: they put their names upon heaps of earth*. So the LXX read, which seems to give the easier and more natural sense. The latter part refers to the monumental inscriptions. “There is nothing left but their names, inscribed on heaps of earth.” Houbigant, who agrees in this interpretation, renders the latter clause somewhat differently. *The sepulchre is their dwelling for ever, the habitation for many generations of those who have had a name upon earth*.

Ver. 12. *Nevertheless, &c.*] *Yet man, while he is in honour, understandeth or regardeth not; as the beasts are cut off, so is he*, ver. 13. *This their way is their folly; yet their posterity will run the same way, or approve their doings*. See Houb. and Mudge.

Ver. 14. *Like sheep, &c.*] *Like sheep they shall be laid in the place of the dead; death shall feed on them; their morning-shepherds rule over them, and their flesh is to be consumed; destruction is to them in their folds*. So Houbigant, keeping up the metaphor all through from sheep. The Psalmist seems to consider *הַאָרְצָה* *sheel* as a place where the deceased were penned up like sheep, for the food of death; while, according to the common interpretation, God would raise up the righteous again, as it were in the morning, after a sort of deathlike suffering, to be masters over these rich wicked men. Particularly, he himself speaks with confidence that God would raise him. There is in Pf. xc. somewhat of the same mode of speaking, where the morning is considered as a kind of resurrection for good men after a state of black sufferings. Some think that the phrase, *in the morning*, signifies only *speedily*,—*in a short time*. See Pf. xc. 14. For my own part, I cannot help preferring Houbigant's interpretation, which, continuing the metaphor, speaks, simply of the future punishment of the wicked,

P.

when

and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;

17 For when he dieth he shall carry no-

thing away: his glory shall not descend after him.

18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.

19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

20 Man *that is* in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts *that* perish.

when they have departed this life. For those who think otherwise, those passages in the New Testament may well be referred to, where we are assured that the just shall rise and reign with Christ.

Ver. 18. Though while he lived, &c.] Houbigant, after many of the ancient versions, renders this, *Though in life he indulges himself, and will praise thee so long as thou shalt do well to him.* *ver. 19. Yet shall he go, &c.* Mudge gives nearly the same sense with this version: *Though whilst he lived he felicitated his soul, and men praised thee, that thou usest thyself well.* His gloss is, "Though he lived ever so luxuriously, and men talked of him as one who *vixit dum vixit bene*, "lived well as long as he lived." The change of the number in our version, as well as in this of Mudge, appears very awkward, unless we are to suppose it a clause of general admonition thrown in by the Psalmist, signifying, "that so long as you live in a state of luxury and opulence, indulging your bodily appetites, you will always find flatterers and parasites sufficient to applaud you."

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Psalmist, with solemnity, introduces his important discourse, and calls upon all, both high and low, to attend the lessons of instruction that he was about to deliver. The one that they might know the vanity of their possessions; the other, that they might be content in the want of them, nor envy those who enjoyed them. His subject was concerning the truest wisdom, and he spoke after deep meditation: his discourse might indeed appear to the world parabolical and dark; but he desired so to incline his own ear to divine teaching, that he might be enabled to make the matter clear to others, and with his harp engage, by pleasing harmony, the ears of others to listen to his song. *Note;* (1.) The poor need as much be warned against envy and discontent, as the rich against pride and worldly confidence. (2.) Divine subjects should be spoken of with great thought and seriousness. (3.) What we inculcate on others, we must recommend by our own practice. (4.) Music answers its original design when employed to convey, or imprint, the sentiments of Divine wisdom.

2dly, Having engaged attention, he begins to open his parable. He describes,

L The security of gracious souls, and intimates how unspeakably superior that is to all worldly wealth. In the days of affliction they are delivered from all distressing fear, with which worldly men are overwhelmed; and even in death and judgment, when iniquity compasseth about the sinner, and riches profit not in the day of wrath, every faithful soul shall be confident in the pardoning love of a

reconciled God. *Note;* A sense of God's love, and the near prospect of glory, are infinitely more precious than thousands of gold and silver.

2. The insufficiency of worldly riches to ransom a brother from the hand of death, or disease, or to save his soul from hell. No gifts can bribe or secure from the arrest of God's messengers; no riches profit in the day of wrath, to suspend the sentence, or prevent its execution. The soul is too precious to be purchased by corruptible things, such as silver and gold: if the blood of Jesus, and the redemption which is in him, be neglected, all other price is fruitless; and the sinner perishes for ever.

3dly, Two reasons are here further urged, why the faithful should endure want in patient hope, and neither fear nor envy the prosperity of the proud.

1. Because in death the soul of the faithful believer has hope: for the Lord will redeem him from the power of the grave, and receive him into his everlasting arms of love: the same Jesus who has paid the price of his redemption, will assuredly raise him up at the last day.

2. Because the end of the proud and ungodly is terrible. In the present dispensation of God's providence, indeed, they are frequently seen to flourish; their riches flow in like a river; their families increase; their names are respected; they bless themselves, as if they had heaven's favour, and say, Soul, take thine ease; whilst others foolishly follow their example, and encourage the deceit, praising their worldly wisdom, and admiring them as the truly happy men. Such general approbation, and apparent prosperity, might be apt to awaken the envy, or excite the fears, of the righteous. But there is no cause for either: this big-swollen worm is dust of the earth, and returning quickly to the grave: thither, neither his riches, honour, nor fame can descend: among his fathers his sepulchre will be found; and, when once he has left the light of this sun, the outer and eternal darkness must receive him, without one glimpse of hope or joy for ever. Such is the miserable end of the proud man, who neglects the concerns of eternity for the vanities of time; and, stupid as the beasts which perish, understandeth not the things that make for his everlasting peace. *Note;* (1.) We must not take our estimation of men from their own vaunts, or the world's admiration, but from the word of God. Many a joyous sinner, many a great character in the earth, whom man blesses, is a wretch in prospect, and under the curse of God. (2.) It is not what we have in this world, but what we carry with us into the next, that constitutes the true riches. How unspeakably richer is the poor soul which goes to treasure incorruptible in heaven,

PSAL. L.

The majesty of God in the church: his order to gather saints. The pleasure of God is not in ceremonies, but in sincerity of obedience.

A Psalm of Asaph.

THE mighty God, *even* the LORD, 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 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above,

and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

5 Gather my faints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God *is* judge himself. Selah.

7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I *am* God, *even* thy God.

8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings, *to have been* continually before me.

9 I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds.

10 For every beast of the forest *is* mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

heaven, than he who leaves behind him of earth's dross thousands and millions! (3.) They only are wise who consider their latter end; and they the most arrant fools, who forget it. (4.) The state of the most loathsome animal is infinitely preferable to that of the brutish sinner: the one dies, and is no more; the other, after a life of sinful madness, enters upon an eternity of misery.

PSAL. L.

Title. מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף *mizmor leasaph. A psalm of Asaph.] For Asaph. Or, according to the Chaldee paraphrast, "A psalm by the hand of Asaph;" who is supposed to have conveyed it to the tabernacle by the order of David, who probably wrote it, and appointed this Asaph, a Levite, to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and thank and praise the Lord God of Israel. This psalm is an illustrious prophecy, concerning the abrogation of the Jewish religion, the calling of the Gentiles, and the establishment of the true evangelical worship throughout the world. It is delivered with great pomp and sublimity: The first six verses are a previous solemnity to the great trial; in which the Almighty is represented, as calling his people to account before heaven and earth, that they may be witnesses to his justice. He tells them, they must not think to atone for a wicked life by sacrifice: it was not the slain beast, but the homage of the heart which he would accept. For a fine critique upon this exquisite ode, we refer the reader to the beginning of Bishop Lowth's 27th Prelection.*

Ver. 2. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty.] "Here," says Dr. Delaney, "the Almighty kept his court; and "from hence he sent out his ambassadors, the prophets, to "publish his decrees to the whole world around him, with "more ease and speedier conveyance than could possibly "have been done from any other region of the habitable "world. That this was the seat and fountain-head of true "religion, is evidenced beyond all doubt from the history "of the Jewish nation. This was the seat of Melchisedeck, "the king and high-priest of the living God in the days "of Abraham. What the state of Jerusalem was from his

"time to the days of David, nowhere appears; but this "is certain, that from David to Jesus Christ *God was "known in her palaces as a sure refuge. Jerusalem was the "chief, is now the sole source of true religion to the whole "habitable world around it; from hence, as from a cen- "tral point, the light of the law first, and of the gospel "afterwards, shone out to the surrounding nations: and to "this end this city was chosen; was eminently "and emphatically the chosen city of God; beautiful "for situation, and the joy of the whole earth; more especially "when the sun of righteousness rose up in it, the glory of his "people Israel, and a light to lighten the Gentiles, till all the "ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God."* book ii. chap. 8.

Ver. 3. Our God shall come.] That is Christ. Now there are three comings of Christ expressed in the Scripture; the first in humility, in our flesh and nature; the last in glory, for the judging of the whole world; and an intermediate coming, in which he was to effect mighty works by the power of his Spirit. The psalm seems to belong most signally to this coming of our Saviour, as also Pf. xcvi. 10—13. He shall not keep silence, means, according to the original, shall not delay. The figurative expressions in the latter part of the verse represent the terrible manner of his coming, and allude to the giving of the law from mount Sinai.

Ver. 4—6. He shall call to the heavens.] Mr. Mudge reads the 5th verse in a parenthesis, and renders the 4th verse thus; He calleth to the heavens above, and to the earth, in order for the trial of his people.

Ver. 7, 8. Hear, O my people.] The prophet here, as in ver. 5. introduces God the Father, speaking to the church. I will testify against thee, is rendered by Castalio, while I give thee this notice; namely, "of my establishing a new "law with the members of the Christian church, and entering into a covenant of mercy with them, ratified and "sealed by the death of my son." For I am thy God; i. e. in a more particular manner the God of the faithful; See Rom. ix. 6. 8. In the 8th and five following verses is ex-

11 I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine.

12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.

13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

16 But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or *that* thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

17 Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou

consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

20 Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

21 These *things* hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether *such an one* as thyself: *but* I will reprove thee, and set *them* in order before thine eyes.

22 Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be* none to deliver.

23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth *his* conversation *aright* will I shew the salvation of God.

pressed the rejection of the sacrifices of beasts, and of the legal worship. *I will not reprove thee, &c.* means, "I do not complain of any negligence you have been guilty of, with relation to sacrifices, *which were continually before me; punctually and regularly offered to me, according to the law; (See Numb. xxviii. 31.)* But I now testify unto you, and admonish you, that those sacrifices are to cease; since they were but types of the perfect sacrifice of Christ."

Ver. 11. I know all the fowls of the mountains] I know all the fowls of the air. Houbigant.

Ver. 14, 15. Offer unto God, &c.] In these two verses is expressed the establishment of the Christian service, the spiritual oblation of prayer and thanksgiving. By *thanksgiving* here may be meant not only the blessing God for all his mercies in general; but also that eucharistical sacrifice, in which we particularly bless him for the gift of his son to die for us; we are to *pay the vows*, to perform the promises and resolutions made at that eucharist, which are constantly to be attended with offerings to the poor, conformable to the voluntary oblations among the Jews; *With such sacrifice, God is still well pleased.* Heb. xiii. 16. And thus doing, *I will deliver thee*, saith he; that is, for the sake of Messiah, in whose name all our services are to be addressed to God.

Ver. 16, 17. But unto the wicked God saith] The prophet now proceeds, as from the mouth of God, to foretel the destruction of the impenitent Jews; who, having received the law of God, and entered into covenant with him, yet would not be reformed by the preaching of Christ, who came to fulfil the law, and to make a new covenant with them. *What hast thou to do?* &c. was the reproach with which our Saviour upbraided the Jews of his time, who had continually the law of Moses in their mouths, while they were entirely ignorant of the true spirit and the design of it. See John. v. 45. 47. The 17th verse may well be applied to the Pharisees and masters of the synagogue, the secret motives of whose hatred against Christ were, his

sharp reproofs of their hypocrisy and other crimes. See Matt. xxiii. 13, 14, &c.

Ver. 18. When thou sawest a thief, &c.] In this and the two following verses are represented the notorious vices of the synagogue, which was extremely corrupt in the time of Christ. Mudge renders the latter clause of the 19th verse, *thy tongue addeth deceit to deceit;* and the 20th verse, *Thou art continually speaking against thy brother; placing a stumbling-block before the son of thy mother.*

Ver. 21. I kept silence] Or, as at ver. 3. *I delayed, or let thee alone.* "I deferred to cut thee off, that thou mightest have time for repentance. And this delay, this indulgence and patience of mine, thou seemedst to think, was an approbation of those actions, and an encouragement to proceed securely in them: but, fatal mistake! I will severely chastise thee, and make thee thoroughly sensible how grievously thou hast hereby offended me."

Ver. 22, 23. Now consider this] Here God must be supposed to have delivered up the wicked man to punishment irreversible; and upon that, to speak these two verses. Upon this supposition, *lest I tear, &c.* comes in very pertinently. See Hosea, xiii. 7, 8. The last verse sums up what had been the two principal points of charge. "I look upon him only as the man who truly honours me, who offers before me a grateful heart; and none but the man who sets himself to order his life aright, shall ever find protection and blessing from God." See Mudge.

REFLECTIONS.—The matter of this psalm is deeply solemn and weighty.

1. The Psalmist begins with an address, awakening the attention of heaven and earth, from that great God, who, in the glory of uncreated majesty, ascends his radiant throne. The earth, from the rising to the setting sun, is commanded to hearken, while out of Zion, the church of God on earth, or from the heavenly hill of glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, the El, Elohim, Jehovah, the Almighty God, shines

P S A L. LI.

David prayeth for remission of sins, whereof he maketh a deep confession: he prayeth for sanctification. God delighteth not in sacrifice, but in sincerity: David prayeth for the church.

To the chief musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out

my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

shines forth in his gospel to enlighten the earth; or from his judgment-seat sends out his light and truth that he may weigh the actions of men in his balances, and execute righteous judgment. Terrible shall be the day of his coming, as when of old in thick clouds and darkness he descended on Sinai's hoary top, and more awful his voice than those mighty thunderings and words of terror, at which Moses to exceedingly trembled. In such tremendous majesty he appeared, when, after his slighted gospel, swift vengeance seized on the Jewish people; and we wait for the last most awful manifestation of his glory, when the assembled world of men and angels shall stand before his dread tribunal.

2. He commands his saints, the faithful who are or will be saved by grace, to be collected and separated for himself, either by the ministers of the churches; or by his angels on the resurrection-day, who shall gather the righteous from among the wicked: and these faithful ones are described as having *made a covenant with him by sacrifice, or on sacrifice*; that is to say, have laid hold on the covenant of grace established in the Redeemer, and, feeding on the memorials of his sacrifice, have solemnly given up themselves to him, as bought with his blood. *Note*; All our hopes in eternity depend on the great sacrifice that our Redeemer offered in our behalf.

3. His righteousness shall be applauded; the heavens and all their hosts will proclaim it, and praise him for it; *for God is judge himself*, and therefore all his decisions must be guided by unerring justice. His saints shall be acquitted with honour; and the sinner with righteous judgment shall be condemned.

P S A L. LI.

Title. למנצח מזמור לדרור *lamnatseach mizmor ledavid.*] No one can read this psalm of David, but must see all the characters of true repentance in the person who wrote it, and the marks of the deepest sorrow and humiliation for the sins of which he had been guilty. How earnestly does he plead for mercy, and acknowledge his own unworthiness! How ingenuous the confessions that he makes of his offences! How heavy the load of that guilt which oppressed him! The smart of it pierced through his very bones, and the torture that he felt was as though they had been broken and crushed to pieces. He owns that his sins were of too deep a dye for sacrifices to expiate the guilt, and that he had nothing but a broken heart and contrite spirit to offer to that God whom he had so grievously offended. How earnest his prayers, that God would create in him a clean heart, and renew a right spirit

within him! How does he dread the being deserted of God! How earnestly deprecate the being deprived of his favour, the joy of his salvation, and the aids and comforts of his holy spirit! Let but this psalm be read without prejudice, and with a view only to collect the real sentiments expressed in it, and the disposition of heart which appears throughout the whole; and no man of candour will ever suspect that it was the dictate of hypocrisy, or could be penned from any other motive than a strong conviction of the heinousness of his offence, and the earnest desire of God's forgiveness, and restraint from the commission of the like transgressions for the future. Those who reflect upon David's character on account of his conduct in the matter of Uriah, though they cannot too heartily detest the sin, and must severely censure the offender; yet surely may find some room in their hearts for compassion towards him, when they consider how he was surprised into the first crime, and how the fear and dread of a discovery, and his concern for the life of the woman whom he had seduced, led him on to farther degrees of deceit and wickedness, till he completed his guilt by the destruction of a great and worthy man; especially when they see him prostrate before God, confessing his sin, and supplicating forgiveness; and even exempted by God himself from the punishment of death which he had incurred, upon his ingenuously confessing, *I have sinned against the Lord*; 2 Sam. xii. 13. an evident proof that his repentance was sincere, as it secured him immediate forgiveness from God, whom he had offended. See Chandler.

Ver. 1. *Have mercy upon me, &c.*] The gradation in the sense of the three words here made use of to express the divine compassion, and the propriety of the order in which they are placed, deserves particular observation. The first, rendered *have mercy*, or *pity*, denotes that kind of affection which is expressed by moaning over any object that we love and pity; that *σπλαγχνισμός*, natural affection, and tenderness, which even brute creatures discover to their young ones, by the several noises which they respectively make over them; and particularly the shrill voice of the camel, by which it testifies its love to its foal. The second, rendered *loving-kindness*, denotes a strong proneness, a ready, large, and liberal disposition to goodness and compassion; powerfully prompting to all instances of kindness and bounty; flowing as freely and plentifully as milk into the breasts, or as waters from a perpetual fountain. This denotes a higher degree of goodness than the former. The third, rendered *tender mercies*, denotes what the Greeks express by *σπλαγχνισμός*, that most tender

pity

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make

pity which we signify by the moving of the heart and bowels, which argues the highest degree of compassion whereof human nature is susceptible. And how reviving is the belief and consideration of these abundant and tender compassions of God to one in David's circumstances, whose mind laboured under the burthen of the most heinous, complicated guilt, and the fear of the divine displeasure and vengeance! The original word, מַחֵבֵב *meebeeb*, which we render *blat out*, properly signifies to *wipe out*, or wipe any thing absolutely clean, as a person wipes a dish. The original meaning is preferred, 2 Kings, xxi. 13. The purport of the petition is, that God would entirely and absolutely forgive him, so as that no part of the guilt he had contracted might remain, and the punishment of it might be wholly removed. Chandler.

Ver. 2. *Wash me thoroughly, &c.*] The original הרבה כבסני *herab kabseini* is, multiply, or, in multiplying, wash me from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for the word multiply refers to both verbs, wash me and cleanse me, and is well rendered in our version by *thoroughly wash me*; as a garment often washed is thoroughly cleansed from its impurity. This form of expression is frequent in the Old Testament. See Isai. i. 16. The meaning of the Psalmist is, that God, by repentance and faith, would recover him from all his past transgressions, and enable him to live free from the practice of them for the future.

Ver. 3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions*] אדאג *adang*; I know, I am conscious of my transgression. When David saw himself in the parable, and had pronounced his own condemnation, he then saw his sins in their proper aggravations, and his iniquity was ever before him. His own conscience condemned him, and he was in perpetual fear of the effects of the divine displeasure. Dr. Chandler; who, differing in sentiment from Dr. Delaney, thinks that David was greatly insensible of his guilt, and enjoyed the fruits of his crimes without remorse many months after he had committed the sins that he now confesses. No man could call him to account, or had courage enough to put him in mind of his heinous offences; and even God had not yet interposed to awaken his conscience, and bring him to a becoming sense of the guilt that he had contracted; so that he hoped for impunity, and continued easy in the prospect of it, till awakened by Nathan.

Ver. 4. *Against thee, &c.*] Injuries done to private persons are offences against government, and, as to the right of punishment, offences only against government. And therefore, though David had injured Bathsheba, whom he had corrupted, and Uriah, whom he had murdered; yet, as no one could call him to an account, or punish him for those crimes, but God only, whose immediate substitute he was, as king of Israel, God himself being properly the supreme governor, he could say, with great propriety and truth, *against thee only have I sinned*; not as if he had not sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah, and to extenuate his sin; but by way of aggravating his guilt, in that, though he was not arraignable at any earthly tribunal, he was at God's; and that to his punishment he had rendered him-

self obnoxious, and was worthy of having it inflicted on him in the most exemplary manner. For thus it immediately follows; *that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest*. When Nathan had represented the crying and shameful injustice of the rich man, David declares with an oath, that *he was worthy of death*, and therefore condemns himself as deserving that punishment: and though God mercifully declared, *he shall not die*, yet he pronounced a very severe vengeance against him, 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12. And this sentence he acknowledges to be just. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil, and subjected myself to thy punishment; (למיעי) *lemangan*,—*itaut*; See Noldius upon the word;) so that thou wilt be just, בדברך *bedabreka*, in what thou hast spoken; i. e. the sentence thou hast pronounced against me; and pure, i. e. free from all reproach, in judging me; that is, shouldst thou pass sentence of condemnation and death against me." Houbigant reads the words, *Wash me from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sins; that thou mayest hereby be justified in what thou hast spoken, and clear when thou enterest into judgment*: And he explains the words, in what thou hast spoken, of God's promises to David, in reference to his glory, and the prosperity of his kingdom. But I apprehend this is too bold a criticism to be easily allowed; nor do I see it at all necessary to vindicate the apostle's citation of these words, Rom. iii. 4. for there he quotes them only as containing this general truth: that God would be justified in the whole of his procedure with men, and even in the condemnation of the Jews themselves for their unbelief. And nothing could be more applicable to his purpose, than these words of the Psalmist, in the sense in which I have explained them: *So that thou wilt be just in thy sentence; thou wilt be pure in the judgment thou hast pronounced*. Chandler.

Ver. 5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, &c.*] *Behold, I was born, &c.* I do not find that the original word חוללתי *cholalti*, which we render *shapen*, does ever so signify. It unquestionably denotes *to bring forth*, as a woman does her child; and in all the places where it is rendered *shapen*, it would better bear another signification. The rendering in the place before us should be; *Behold I was brought forth in iniquity*; and then the ensuing words will contain the reason of it; because in sin did my mother conceive me. *I was brought forth in iniquity*. This refers to the Psalmist himself; to what he was from his birth, and his state as he came into the world. *It was in sin*; i. e. with great propensities and dispositions to sin; in a state of sensuality, with more irregular, and much stronger tendencies to animal and criminal indulgencies, and the gratification of those lusts which are dishonourable in themselves, and which, when gratified, are sinful in their nature, and highly offensive to God, than they would have been, if the parents themselves had been entirely free from them; and this, as opposed to rectitude of nature, and the regulation of our passions and appetites, in a depraved sinful state. And I should think that there is need of no other proof that we are all born in such a state, that our own experience, and

me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

the present condition of the world we live in. Nor do I see how it could be otherwise with the Psalmist, if what he says of his mother be true, that *she conceived him in sin*, or was herself a sinner, when she first cherished him in her womb. I shall not easily be persuaded to think, that parents, who are sinners themselves, and too much under the influence of bad affections and passions, will be very likely to produce children without transmitting to them some of those disorders and corruptions of nature with which they themselves are infected. And if this be a difficulty, I would beg leave to observe, that it is a difficulty which affects natural, as well as revealed religion: since we must take human nature as it is; and if it be really in a state of disorder and corruption, and cannot be otherwise, considering the common law of its productions, the difficulty must have been as ancient as the first man who was born; and therefore can be no objection against the truth of revelation, but it must be equally so against natural religion, which must equally allow the thing, if it be in reality a fact, with revelation itself. The sense therefore, as I apprehend, of the whole passage is, that the Psalmist owns himself to be the corrupted degenerate offspring of corrupted degenerate parents, agreeable to what was said long before he was born: *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.* Job, xiv. 4. Nor is it unusual with good men, when confessing their own sins before God, to make mention of the sins of their parents, for their greater mortification and humiliation. See 2 Chron. xxix. 6. 2 Kings, xxii. 13. Neh. ix. 16. and elsewhere. So also Horace:

*Ætas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosorem.* Lib. iii. od. 6.

More vicious than their fathers' age,
Our sires begot the present race,
Of actions impious, bold, and base;
And yet, with crimes to us unknown,
Our sons shall mark the coming age their own.

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I shall only farther observe, that David does not mention the circumstance of his being born of sinful parents, and born, as hath been explained, in sin himself, as an excuse for, but rather as an aggravation of his sins; since he ought to have been more upon his guard, and watched more carefully over his sensual passions and affections, as he knew his natural tendency to evil, and had been instructed by the law of God to correct and suppress it; as he more than intimates in the following verse. See Dr. Chandler; whose observations are here more immediately levelled at some remarks upon this text by Dr. Taylor, in his Doctrine of Original Sin, p. 31, &c.

Ver. 6. *Behold, thou desirest truth, &c.*] The common interpretation here is, that David makes mention of God's loving sincerity, in the inward parts, i. e. the mind and spirit, by way of aggravating his own guilt, for the shameful dissimulation that he had been guilty of with respect to

Uriah. To which he adds, *in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom*; that wisdom, which through grace would have enabled him to have maintained his sincerity, had he followed the dictates of it. Dr. Chandler, not acquiescing in this interpretation, would render the words; *Thou desirest or approvest truth, or constancy and firmness in the reins*; i. e. chastity and continence; moderation in the indulgence of all the sensual appetites, and the strict regular government of all the animal propensities and affections; *the reins* being accounted by the Hebrews as the seat of the passions. The next clause is literally, according to the Hebrew, *And by their being obstructed, thou teachest, or do thou teach me wisdom*; i. e. "by their being restrained and kept within bounds may I learn to act a wiser and a better part for the future." In the 14th verse he prays that God would deliver him from the *guilt of blood*, which he had incurred by the murder of Uriah. In the verse before us, he acknowledges that his adulterous commerce with Bathsheba was contrary to that purity and self-government which were pleasing and acceptable to God, and prays that, notwithstanding any inordinate tendencies that he might derive in his constitution from being conceived by a sinful mother; yet that God would give him wisdom and grace to obstruct and lay them under such restraint, as would enable him to approve himself better to God for the time to come.

Ver. 7. *Purge me with hyssop* רְחַטְתֵּנִי *techatteeni*: properly, *expiate my sin*, with hyssop. The Psalmist alludes to the purification from the leprosy; Lev. xiv. 52. or from the touch of a dead body; Numb. xix. 19. both which were to be done by the sprinkling of water and other things with hyssop. The Psalmist well knew that his sins were too great to be expiated by any legal purifications, and therefore prays that God would himself expiate and restore him through the great Sacrifice; i. e. make him as free from those criminal propensities to sin, and from all the bad effects of his aggravated crimes, as if he had been purified from a leprosy by the water of cleansing, sprinkled on him by a branch of hyssop, and that he might be, if possible, clearer from all the defilement and guilt of sin than the new fallen snow, through the Blood of the great Atonement. I think both these senses are included in the expiation which the Psalmist prays for; as the person whose leprosy was expiated was wholly cured of his disease, and freed from all the incapacities attending it.

Ver. 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness*] The displeasure which God expressed against the sins he had been guilty of, and the deep sense he had of the aggravated nature of them, filled him with such pains and agonies of mind, that he compares them to that exquisite torture which he must have felt had all his bones been crushed: for the original word רָכַת *dikkitha*, signifies more than *broken*; viz. being entirely *mashed*: and he compares the joy which God's declaring himself fully reconciled to him would produce in his mind, to that inconceivable pleasure which would

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy free spirit*.

13 *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14 Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: *and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*

15 O LORD, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

would arise from the instantaneous restoring and healing of those bones after they had been thus broken and crushed to pieces.

Ver. 9. Hide thy face from my sins.] The verb סָתַר *satar*, properly signifies *to veil*, or hide with a veil. The meaning is, "Do not look upon my sins with a severe eye, nor place them in the light of thy countenance with all their aggravations; but draw, as it were, a veil between thyself and them, that the sight of them may no longer provoke thee to anger, or draw down the deserved vengeance upon me."

Ver. 10. Create in me a clean heart.] A clean heart, is a heart free from those impure and disordered passions of which David had too fatally felt the effects, and in possession and under the influence of those sacred dispositions of piety, holiness, and virtue, in which the moral rectitude and purity of the mind consists. A right spirit, is more properly a firm, constant, determined spirit. It implies such a resolution and firmness of soul, as through grace should effectually secure him against the power of all future temptations. See 2 Cor. v. 17. Ephes. ii. 10. Mudge renders it, *A spirit firmly steady.*

Ver. 11. Cast me not away from thy presence.] From before thy face. Heb. The coming to God's presence, was the approaching the tabernacle of the ark, and its courts, where the sacrifices were offered, and the visible tokens of God's majesty appeared in the cloud and glory: and therefore, to be cast out of his presence, was to be debarred the privilege of appearing in his house, and joining in the solemnities of his worship. This was what David dreaded, as the consequence of his offences, and what he grievously lamented, when driven from Jerusalem by the rebellion of Absalom, as appears from what he said to Zadok, 2 Sam. xv. 25. And he therefore prays that this might not be one part of his punishment. The next petition for God's holy Spirit, and the continuance of it, must mean the Spirit of God, which was necessary to effect this great change in the temper and habit of his mind, and to confirm and establish it. He had forfeited this great blessing by his presumptuous crimes, and therefore earnestly deprecates his being deprived of it, that he might not be involved again in the same guilty practices, the recollection of which now gave him the deepest distress. Chandler.

Ver. 12. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.] i. e. The pleasure I have formerly enjoyed, of having a special interest in thy favour, and of being assured that thou wilt continually protect and deliver me from all mine enemies and troubles. The next clause might be rendered nearer to the Hebrew, *Let a free spirit uphold me;* for the pronoun

thy is not in the original. נְדִיבָה *nedibah*, rendered *free*, is used as a substantive only in two or three places, and has a very significant meaning, denoting a princely, ingenuous, liberal disposition. His spirit had been depressed, and greatly terrified, by the sense of God's displeasure, and he was filled with shame and confusion for the greatness of his sins, and prays that God would restore him to his former freedom, ease, and alacrity of mind, both in discharging his duty as king of Israel, and as a worshipper of his God; and that this free spirit might uphold, or perpetually influence, and carry him through the remainder of his life. Chandler. Houbigant renders it, *And let a spirit of magnanimity support me.*

Ver. 13. And sinners shall be converted unto thee.] i. e. "Be persuaded, by my declaring to them the mercy I have experienced in the forgiveness of my sins, to return to thee by repentance, that they also may obtain the pardon of their offences." Happy for mankind, says Dr. Delaney, upon the consideration urged by David in this verse,—that there is such an instance, an authentic instance, of falling virtue and recovering guilt; an instance, so fitted to mortify the vanity of virtue, and the excellence of exalted piety; to raise the power and preciousness of humble penitence, to abate the pride of self-sufficiency, and support the hope of frailty! Who can confide in his own strength when he sees a David fall! Who can despair of divine mercy when he sees him forgiven! Sad triumph of sin over all that is great and excellent in man! Glorious triumph of repentance [and grace] over all that is shameful and dreadful in sin! Book iv. c. 24.

Ver. 14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness.] This is the proper sense of the expression. The Hebrew דָּמִים *damim*, is *bloods*, in the plural; which generally signifies *murder*. See 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8.; Pf. lix. 2, 3.; Ezek. vii. 23. The meaning of the petition here is, "Deliver me from the bloods I have unrighteously spilled; from the guilt of Uriah's murder." Thy righteousness here signifies thy truth; veracity, and steadfastness to the promises which God had given. He further prays, *Open thou my lips,* &c. *Ver. 15. "Remember thy gracious promises, and accomplish them, notwithstanding my unworthiness, that I may have renewed reasons to celebrate thy praises:"* for this is the meaning of God's opening his lips; furnishing him with new motives and occasions of gratitude and thankfulness; Chandler. Mudge thinks that *bloods* does not mean blood spilled, but that debt of blood whereby a man is rendered guilty of death for any capital crime; such as adultery, &c.

Var.

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

Ver. 16. For thou desirest not sacrifice, &c.] Chandler renders this verse, *For thou takest no pleasure in sacrifice, that I should give it; thou approvest not whole burnt-offerings.* There were no sacrifices of atonement appointed by the law for murder and adultery; and therefore the Psalmist says, that God did not in his case desire them; and that if he was to offer them as a propitiation for his sins, they would not be accepted; the punishment annexed to these crimes being death.

Ver. 17. The sacrifices of God, &c.] The sacrifices of God are either, such as were fit to be offered to God in consequence of such grievous offences as David had committed, or such as God would regard, or as could be in any degree available to secure his forgiveness through the alone merit of the great Atonement. These sacrifices were a broken spirit, or a broken and contrite heart. The expressions mean in general a mind greatly depressed, humbled, and almost overwhelmed with affliction and grief, of whatever kind, or whencever they arise. Ps. xxxiv. 17, 18, 19; whether from poverty, as Ps. lxxiv. 21; cix. 16.; or banishment, Ps. cxlvii. 2, 3.; or captivity or imprisonment, Isa. lxi. 1.; or from moral and religious causes, as in the place before us. For David unquestionably means by it, that deep sense of his offence, that affecting concern and grief of heart for the guilt he had contracted, which made him humble himself before God, and take to himself the shame which was his due; filled him with terror lest he should be deserted of God; and rendered him incapable of possessing himself in peace, till God should mercifully restore him to his favour. And it may be observed, that the second word נִדְּכָב *nidkeb*, which we render *contrite*, denotes the being *bruised*, or *broken to pieces*, as a thing is broken and bruised in a mortar: comp. Numb. xi. 8. and therefore, in the moral sense, signifies such a weight of sorrow, as must wholly crush the mind, without some powerful and seasonable relief. Such a broken and contrite spirit, upon account of sins so deeply aggravated and heinous as David's were, was the only sacrifice which he possibly could offer to God, and which he knew God would not despise; i. e. would graciously regard and accept, through the merit of the grand Sacrifice. Religious men argued from the infinite goodness of God, and the promises he made to his repentant returning people, that he would forgive, upon a sincere repentance, even those more aggravated sins to which the law of Moses denounced death, and for the expiation of which it had appointed no sacrifices of atonement whatsoever. I cannot omit even Mr. Boyle's remarks upon this head: "David's amour with the wife of Uriah," says he, "and the orders he gave to destroy her husband, are two most enormous crimes; but he was so grieved for them, and shewed forth so admirable a repentance, that this is not the passage in his life wherein he contributes the least to

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"the instruction and education of the faithful. We therein learn the frailty of the faints; and it is a precept of vigilance; we therein learn in what manner we ought to lament our sins; and it is an excellent model." Let me just add, that the wisdom and equity of the law of Moses evidently appears, in that it appointed no sacrifices to atone for such crimes; the pardoning of which would have been inconsistent with the peace and safety of civil society; such as those which David laments in this Psalm, *murder and adultery*. Here, the punishment prescribed by the law being death, David had no other way of escaping it than by the undeserved mercy of God: God was pleased to extend this mercy to him, to shew how acceptable the sinner's unfeigned repentance will be, through the mediation of Christ, whatever be the nature and aggravation of his offences. And if we learn from hence what the Scripture calls *the deceitfulness of sin*, to be cautious of the first beginning of it, and not to indulge those sensual appetites, which, when given way to, draw men insensibly into crimes that they would once have trembled at the thoughts of committing; we shall make the best and wisest improvement of this melancholy part of David's history, and be real gainers by his sins and sorrows. Chandler.

Ver. 18, 19. Do good in thy good pleasure, &c.] It has been observed, that this and the next verse seem plainly to shew this Psalm to have been written during the captivity, and therefore the title to be wrong; and that when the Psalm was penned, God could not accept any offering, because the temple and altar were destroyed; but there seems little weight in these observations. The inscriptions to the Psalms are very ancient, and all the versions agree in referring this Psalm to David and the affair of Uriah; nor could any thing be more suitable to his circumstances than this composition throughout. As to the objection brought from the words, *build thou the walls of Jerusalem*, there is no strength in it: when David made it the place of his residence, he greatly enlarged and fortified it, that it might be safe against the attacks of the neighbouring nations: these works must require a considerable time to carry them on; and as, probably, they were not yet finished, he prays that, though he was unworthy of being prospered by God in this great undertaking, of rendering Mount Zion and Jerusalem secure by the fortifications with which he intended to encompass it, yet that God would prosper, according to his good pleasure, Zion, and enable him to build up the walls of Jerusalem, till he had fully completed them. Or if these walls were actually completed, David might pray with great propriety that God would *build them*, that is, *defend and protect them*; uphold and preserve them in safety: for in this sense the word בָּנָה *banah*, to *build*, is frequently used. See Prov. xiv. 1.; Ps. lxxxix. 2. 4. What is further added, that God could not accept any offering, because the temple and altar were destroyed,

P S A L. LII.

David, condemning the spitefulness of Doeg, propheseth his destruction. The righteous shall rejoice at it. David, upon his confidence in God's mercy, giveth thanks.

To the chief musician, Mafchil, *A Psalm* of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.

WH Y boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.

destroyed, is without any foundation; because there is not one word mentioned about the temple, nor the destruction of the altar; and the reason why God would accept no sacrifice, was, not because there was no altar, but because God had appointed no sacrifice for adultery and murder; which could be expiated no otherwise than by the death of the offender. But as God had by his peculiar mercy remitted the sentence of death, the Psalmist adds, that if God would graciously favour Sion, enable him to finish the walls of Jerusalem, and establish the safety of the city by his protection; *Then shalt thou be pleased with sacrifices of righteousness; i. e.* such sacrifices as God had appointed by the law; offered on such occasions, and for such ends, as God himself had prescribed, in opposition to those which he had just before declared God would not accept. Had David offered sacrifices of propitiation for his adultery and murder, they would have been illegal, unwarrantable, impious sacrifices, and not *sacrifices of righteousness*. The *whole burnt offerings* frequently consisted of bullocks, Lev. i. 5. These, the Psalmist adds, should *ascend to his altar*, as some render the word; or, as our version, *They shall offer bullocks upon thine altar*. The words are capable of both versions, and the sense in each is nearly the same. He seems to refer principally to the peace or thank-offerings, which, when made by pious men, according to God's prescription, could not fail of being acceptable to him. Chandler. Though the notes on this very important and useful Psalm have extended to a greater length than we commonly allow, I cannot withhold the following observations, in conclusion, from Dr. Delaney; who remarks, that as this Psalm was directed to the chief musician, it was, without doubt, publicly sung in the tabernacle in the presence of all the people; the king himself attending and prostrate before the throne of mercy. "It is surely matter," says he, "of uncommon curiosity to contemplate David in this condition. Behold the greatest monarch of the earth thus humbled for his sins before God! confessing his shame with contrition and confusion of face! calling out for mercy, and imploring pardon, in the presence of his meanest subjects! There is something in such an image of penitence, more fitted to strike the soul with a dread and abhorrence of guilt, than it is possible to express: something more edifying, more adapted to the human infirmities, and more powerful to reform them, than the most perfect example of unflinching obedience; especially, if the supplications and petitions he pours out to God be thoroughly suited to the solemnity of the occasion, and condition of the penitent; as they un-

2 Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

3 Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.

4 Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.

5 God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

"doubtedly are in this Psalm. Here the penitent humbly and earnestly begs for mercy;—he acknowledges his sin, and his innate depravity, the source of it; he begs to be renewed in the grace of God, and in that health, which the horror of his wickedness had impaired. Above all, he earnestly beseeches God, not to cast him off, nor deliver him up to a reprobate sense. *Cast me not away from thy presence:—Take not thy holy spirit from me:—O give me the comfort of thy help again:—Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation!* In one word, the soul of shame, of sorrow, of remorse, of sincere repentance, and bitter anguish under the agonies of guilt, breathes strong and fervent through every line of this hallowed composition. And it is, I doubt not, David's greatest consolation at this moment, when he blesses God for the providential effects of his fall, that those crimes which wrought his shame, and sorrow, and infamy, have, in the humility, the piety, the contrition of confessing them, in this and several other Psalms; composed upon the same occasion, rescued and reformed millions."

P S A L. LII.

Title. בא דוד - למנצח משכיל לדוד - *lamnatseach masekiil ledavid.—ba david. David is come.] David came.* This Psalm consists of three parts; the *first* is a description of Doeg's character. He was one who gloried in his villainy, was fruitful in inventions to ruin others, of a smooth tongue, but of an extremely mischievous one; who delighted in malicious charges, supported them by lies, and took pleasure in acts of wickedness and cruelty. The share he had in the murder of the priests is a full proof of the truth of this character. The *second* part foretels the utter ruin of this man, his fortune and family, and the triumph of good men, when they saw him made an example of divine justice. In the *third* part, the Psalmist assures himself of protection, and future prosperity from God; and that his example in praising God, and patiently waiting for his salvation, would be a pleasing encouragement to all the saints. Chandler.

Ver. 1. O mighty man] It seems probable, that Doeg, after he had massacred the priests, boasted of his loyalty to Saul in having prevented the treasonable schemes which he artfully insinuated had been concerted by David and the priests; and that he had been liberally rewarded by Saul upon account of it. Now the Psalm begins by expelling a kind of contempt of Doeg. "O mighty man! Saul's chief herdsman!—Man of wondrous prowess! thus to destroy a set of defenceless and innocent people:—boast

"no

6 The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:

7 Lo, *this is* the man *that* made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, *and* strengthened himself in his wickedness.

8 But I *am* like a green olive-tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

9 I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done *it*: and I will wait on thy name; for *it is* good before thy saints.

“no more; thy cruelty shall be amply repaid. As for me, I am out of the reach of thy malice. That *goodness of God*, which thou reproachest me for trusting in, is my sure protection, and will follow me day by day.” Mr. Schultens remarks, that גִּבּוֹר *gibbor*, signifies in Arabic, a proud, impious man, a sense which well suits the place before us. Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that not Doeg only, but Saul also, is glanced at in this verse, which he renders thus, *Why boastest thou thyself, O man of power, that thou canst do mischief? Whereas the goodness of God is from day to day.* A king, says he, is the representative of God upon earth; and his duty, to imitate the divine goodness, and to protect and to bless. A tyrant reverses this glorious resemblance; and employs all that power to the purposes of mischief, which was only bestowed for those of beneficence.

Ver. 2. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs] I do not very well understand, says Dr. Chandler, the propriety of the *tongue's* devising mischief, and devising it *like a sharp razor*; but we may easily avoid this harsh comparison, which Mr. Le Clerc justly complains of, by rendering the words, *Thou contrivest mischiefs with thy tongue, as with a sharp razor, O thou dealer in deceit!* i. e. “Thou contrivest, with thy smooth and flattering tongue, to wound the reputation and character of others; as though thou wert cutting their throats with a smooth or sharp razor.” Or, much to the same sense, *Thou contrivest wickedness: thy tongue is like a sharp razor: thou dealest in deceit; or, O thou deceitful doer!* The construction will bear either of these senses: the comparing a smooth, deceitful, murderous tongue to a sharp razor, is natural and lively. Chandler.

Ver. 4. Thou lovest all devouring words] Hebrew. *All the words of devouring, or destruction; O thou deceitful tongue!* Or, repeating the word from the foregoing clause, *Thou lovest the tongue of deceit; i. e. the deceitful tongue; or such calumnies as are the most pernicious in their nature, and as may most effectually involve others in utter destruction.* Houbigant follows the last version.

Ver. 5. God shall likewise destroy thee] The Psalmist makes use of four words to denote the utter vengeance which awaited this deceitful and bloody man: all of them have a very strong meaning. The *first* signifies to *pull down* and *break utterly to pieces*; as when an altar or tower is demolished: Judg. vi. 30.; viii. 9. The *second* signifies to *twist* any thing, or *pluck it up* by twisting it round, as trees are sometimes twisted up; see Schultens on Prov. vi. 27. The *third* signifies utterly to *sweep away* any thing, like *dust* or *chaff*; and the whole expression means, not “sweep thee away from thy tent,” but “sweep thee away, that thou mayest be no longer a tent:” thyself, thy family, thy fortune, shall be wholly and entirely swept away, and dissipated for ever. To which the *fourth* verse answers, *He shall root thee out*

from the land of the living. It is impossible for words to express a more entire and absolute destruction. Chandler.

Ver. 6. The righteous also shall see, and fear] The peculiar judgments of God executed upon exemplary offenders, who have been guilty of treachery, rapine, and murder, good men will carefully observe, and observe with awful pleasure and thankfulness: not that they rejoice to see the punishments and miseries of mankind, in themselves considered; no person of humanity taking pleasure in the execution of the worst of criminals, as such. But as the administration of justice is always a right, and so far a pleasant thing; as instances of God's vengeance are sometimes necessary to keep men in tolerable order; and as the cutting off such kind of incorrigible offenders prevents them from doing farther mischiefs, and is so far a public and common blessing to mankind; it was impossible that any good man who had seen the crimes of this treacherous and bloody Edomite, retaliated on him by divine Providence, could do otherwise than approve so righteous a retribution; and, when he observed it, forbear in triumph to say, as at the next verse;

Ver. 7. Lo! this is the man, &c.] “See the fate of the haughty slanderer and murderer! Where are all his boasted riches and prosperity? He was too proud to place his safety in God: but *trusted in the multitude of his riches*; thinking his wealth would defend him from the punishment due to his villainies.” Mr. Schultens renders the words, *Ferociebat in vasta sua cupiditate*: “He grew insolent and furious in his boundless appetite, viz. to heap up riches, and satisfy the malice and cruelty of his heart.”

Ver. 8. But I am like a green olive-tree] The olive-tree is an evergreen, not liable to decay, and therefore of a very long duration. To this the Psalmist compares himself, to denote the stability and perpetuity of his prosperity, and that of his family; the olive propagating itself by fresh shoots, and being thus far, as it were immortal. See Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xvii. cap. 30., and Theophrast. Hist. Plant. lib. iv. cap. 15. One principal part also of the happiness which David promised himself was, that he should have a constant admission to the house of God, and the solemnities of his worship there; notwithstanding he was now driven from it by the malice of his enemies: adding, *I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.* His promises shall never fail; nor shall those who hate me rejoice over me in my destruction. Chandler. Mr. Mede supposes, that though it was not lawful to plant trees near the altar of God, there were other places appointed for public worship, which might properly be called *houses of God*; and in particular *proscenias*, or places where they met for prayer; which were inclosed round, but open at the top, and generally shaded with trees. And if we consider these places

P S A L. LIII.

David describeth the corruption of a natural man: he convinceth the wicked by the light of their own conscience: he glorieth in the salvation of God.

To the chief musician upon Mahalath, Maschil, A Psalm of David.

THE fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.* Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity; *there is none that doeth good.*

2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God.

3 Every one of them is gone back: they

as consecrated to the purposes of religion, we may well imagine, that the trees there planted would be religiously preserved, and in process of time would challenge a venerable regard from their antiquity, their spacious extent, and lofty stature: so that in this view, when the Psalmist compares himself to an *olive-tree*, a *cedar*, or any other evergreen *in the house of God*, there is a particular emphasis in the allusion. Mr. Mede supposes, with great probability, that these profuchas, and the synagogues, are *the houses of God*, the burning of which is lamented Pf. lxxiv. 8. See his Discourse on Joshua xxvi. 26. Fenwick seems to me to render the verse most consistently of any translator;

But as an olive, ever fresh and green,
When planted in God's house, I hope to stand.
I in God's mercy only ever trust.

Ver. 9. *I will wait on thy name*] To wait on God's name, is, to wait or call upon, and expect aid from him, whose name is Jehovah, and who is every thing which that name implies. *This is good before the saints* as they would approve his piety and devotion, and as it would tend to confirm and establish them in their religious principles, practices, and hopes. Chandler. Fenwick renders the first clause of this verse,

Thou art my maker; thee I'll ever praise.

P S A L. LIII.

Title. *למנצח על מחלת משכיל לדוד* *laninatseach al machalath maskiil ledavid.*] The occasion of this Psalm, which varies but little from the 14th, and for which variation it is not easy to account, is supposed to have been the next revolt which the Israelites in general made immediately after the rebellion of Absalom, before David had quite recovered Jerusalem, and upon the quarrel which arose between the men of Judah and the men of Israel about precedency in bringing back the king; when Sheba. blew the trumpet of rebellion afresh; and, it is said, every man of Israel left David. See 2 Sam. xx. 2. *מחלת על* *al machalath*, Upon *Mahalath*, is rendered by some, *Upon the hollow instruments*; and by Houbigant, *Upon the chorus*. Mudge says, *Mahalath* is probably a kind of music, denominated from a song, in which was that word; which signifies a *malady* or *illness*; designed, if one may guess from Pf. lxxxviii. to raise in the

are altogether become filthy; *there is none that doeth good*, no, not one.

4 Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as they eat bread*: they have not called upon God.

5 There were they in great fear, *where no fear was*: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth *against* thee: thou hast put *them* to shame, because God hath despised them.

6 Oh that the salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

mind a melancholy, or sort of pensive gloominess. Fenwick is nearly of the same opinion. See his *Thoughts*, p. 57. The Syriac title informs us, that the Psalm was occasioned by Achitophel's advising Absalom to pursue David, and put him to death: but, with respect to Christians, it intimates the revelation of our Saviour, and deliverance from atheistic people. There was, most probably, more of it in the original Syriac copy. See the notes on the 14th Psalm.

Ver. 5. *For God hath scattered the bones of him*] This is generally referred to Sheba; who, being left at last to shift for himself, was shut up in the city of Abel, and there taken and beheaded; (see 2 Sam. xx. 22.) after which his body, most probably, was exposed to the fowls of the air, or the wild beasts, inasmuch that his *bones* were indeed at last scattered. Mudge renders this and the foregoing verse thus: *Do not they observe, the dealers in vanity, devourers of my people? They eat bread: they called not upon God: ver. 5. They were upon the spot in a great fear, where no fear was. Yes, God hath scattered the bones of the wile wretch; thou confoundest them; for God had spurned them off.*

Ver. 6. *Oh that the salvation, &c.*] David here, making a review of the 14th Psalm, in which his distress in the time of Absalom's rebellion is described, desires of God to give his people a still further and new *salvation*; for the word *ישועות* *ieshuoth*, here is in the plural number, but in Pf. xiv. it is in the singular; and therefore here it may be fitly rendered a *complete salvation*, or *deliverance*. The word *captivity*, in the next clause, is no objection to the interpretation above given of this Psalm; for it sometimes signifies no more than a great desolation, such as was that of Job's estate and family. See Job, xlii. 10.

REFLECTIONS.—We have here,

1. The practical atheism of the natural heart. We first leave God far above out of our sight, and then dare sin securely.

2. The universal guilt of mankind is asserted. Not some, or a few in one age or nation, but all in every age, in every nation, have come short of the glory of God.

3. The greatness of this guilt is noticed, as flowing from that deep and desperate corruption in the nature of man, which produces abominable iniquity in the practice; particu-

P S A L. LIV.

David, complaining of the Ziphims, prayeth for salvation: upon his confidence in God's help, he promiseth sacrifice.

To the chief musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

SAVE me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.

2 Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers are risen up against me, and

oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.

4 Behold God is mine helper: the LORD is with them that uphold my soul.

5 He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.

6 I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good.

7 For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.

particularly selfishness, covetousness, oppression, and habitual neglect of prayer. *Note;* Sin is the abominable thing which God hates: the least spot of it, uncleaned, must eternally exclude us from his presence.

4. The folly, as well as the wickedness, of sinners is great: they live without consideration; they have no knowledge of themselves, or of God; of their guilt here, or their ruin hereafter; the god of this world hath blinded their eyes.

5. Their security will be shortly at an end, and terrors overtake the finally impenitent. They shall be in great fear, where before they laughed at danger; ruin unavoidable shall destroy them, everlasting confusion cover them, and God shall despise their impotent resistance.

6. The Psalmist concludes with an earnest wish, that God would hasten the salvation of his faithful people, rescue them from amid the world which lieth in wickedness, and cause them to rejoice in Jesus, their glorious Redeemer and Saviour. *Note;* (1.) Though we are all by nature formed from the same mass of corruption, they who have justifying and sanctifying faith in the blood of Jesus, are saved from the pollutions which are in the world. (2.) All sinners, of whatever rank or degree, and especially those who in the spirit of Antichrist oppose the power of true religion, and persecute its professors, will perish together, in the day when the triumphs of God's saints shall be completed. (3.) We shall assuredly join the Psalmist's prayer, if our hearts possess his hopes, and cry, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

P S A L. LIV.

Title. לְמִנְצֵחַ בְּנִינְתֵי-בְבוּא הַזִּפְיִים *lammats'ach bingimth—bebo hazziphim.* To the chief musician on Neginoth—when the Ziphims] To the master of the stringed instruments—when the Ziphites. This Psalm begins with a prayer to God for his protection. The Psalmist then represents his danger from lawless oppressive men, who sought after his life. He encourages himself by faith and hope in God, and declares his resolution to render a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving to his kind preserver, who had delivered him out of all his troubles. Of the suitability of the Psalm to the occasion, every one who reads it will be convinced.

Ver. 1. Save me, O God, by thy name] The name of God frequently denotes the attributes, or providence, or operations of God, in the sacred writings; and to be saved by his name, is to be saved by the interposition of his power and goodness. Or the words may be rendered,

Save me, בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה beshimka, because of thy name; viz. "to vindicate the honour of it, and thy truth and faithfulness in the promises thou hast made me." See Nold. p. 152. sect. 23. Judge me by thy strength, or power, means, "determine, decide my cause, by thy mighty power." Saul, in the cause between him and David, was resolved to end it by force only, and to arbitrate it no other way than by a javelin, a sword, or his forces. The Psalmist well knew that Saul, in this respect, would be too hard for him; and therefore applies for protection and justice to one, whose power he knew was infinitely superior to that of his adversaries, and who, he was assured, could and would defend him.

Ver. 3. Strangers are risen up against me] The inhabitants of Ziph, and of the wilderness and mountains near it, might very probably, as some think, be chiefly aliens and foreigners, under the dominion of the Hebrews. But it is to be remarked, that זָרִים *zarim, strangers,* is not always to be understood of persons who are strangers by birth or nation, but as to acquaintance, manners, and affection, of a hostile disposition and mind, strangers as to religion, virtue, compassion, and humanity. See Pf. lxi. 8.; Hof. v. 7. That this is the Psalmist's meaning appears from the following words: *Oppressors seek after my life, who have not set God before them:* a description which well agrees with the character and conduct of these treacherous Ziphites. Chandler.

Ver. 4. The Lord is with them that uphold my soul] These words are capable of a double sense, each applicable to the context. Either "God is with them who uphold me, as their friend and helper, to assist and prosper them;" or, "God is amongst them; he is one of the number of those who support me, and will preserve me in safety"

Ver. 5. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies] לְשָׂרְרֵי לְשׂוֹרְרֵי, to them who, with a hostile mind, watch and observe me. This was the conduct of the Ziphites to David: they acted as Saul's spies, and watched David, to betray him to destruction. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 23. The next clause should be rendered in the future, conformable to this.

Ver. 6. I will freely sacrifice, &c.] I will sacrifice to thee voluntary oblations. I will acknowledge thy name, for this is good. Chandler. See Exod. xxxv. 29.

Ver. 7. He hath delivered me out of all trouble] From every strait. In Pf. xcii. 11. we have a similar expression to the last clause of this verse, mine eye hath seen, &c. where the words

P S A L. LV.

David in his prayer complaineth of his fearful case: he prayeth against his enemies, of whose wickedness and treachery he complaineth: he comforteth himself in God's preservation of him, and confusion of his enemies.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, *A Psalm of David.*

GIVE ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.

words *his desire*, are supplied by our translators, and are not in the original. As the sentence, *Mine eye hath seen upon mine enemies*, seems imperfect, it has been variously filled up. Bishop Hare adds, *quod volui: mine eye hath seen what I would, or wisbed, &c.* Le Clerc, *sine metu, without any fear of them*; not to mention any other: but I apprehend there is no need of any supplement, and that though the sentence is not quite complete, yet any addition would take from the spirit of it. It is a sort of triumph over his enemies: *Mine eye looked upon them*; as we render the words, Gen. xxix. 32. "They came near enough to be *seen* by me, and that was all. God kept them from coming near me, so that they all have been disappointed of their prey." This was the very case with David, when Saul encompassed him with his troops, and, by an unexpected call, was obliged to retreat. Or the words may be rendered, *mine eyes saw mine enemies*: "Saw them with pleasure at a distance, and enjoyed the fight; especially when they marched off, and left me to escape." See Chandler, and Pf. lxiv. 8.; Ecclef. ii. 1.; Isai. lxvi. 5. Dr. Delaney renders it, *God hath snatched me out of every strait, and on mine enemies hath mine eye seen*; or, as the Arabic explains it, *rested*. God hath delivered him out of all his straits, (for, doubtless, it was a distressful dilemma to be forced either to die tamely, or fight his sovereign and his own people,) and he could now calmly and confidently survey those enemies whom before he did not dare to look in the face. The prayers of great men in distress, and their thanksgivings after great deliverances, have always been matter of uncommon delight to curiosity, and men of ferious and religious spirits. Nor does the glory of any great man ever shine out to their eyes in half the lustre, as when they behold him upon his knees, lifting up his eyes, or stretching out his hands, to heaven; or, what is yet greater, prostrating himself before it, in humiliation and acknowledgment. Then is the hero seen in all his dignity! and in this light it must be owned that Henry the Fourth of France, before the battle of Yvry, and Henry the Fifth of England, after that of Agincourt, and David after this deliverance, appear with a grandeur very superior to that of either a Cæsar or an Alexander. The latter, in their height of glory, were but mere rulers of men, but the former, upon their knees, the dependants and the friends of God.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, It is a comfort to a child of God, that, whatever he meets with from man, he has a friend to fly to, who will yield him full relief. We have here,

1. David's prayer for help and strength. *Save me, O God, by thy name*; by thy power and wisdom, which can frustrate the devices of my perfidious foes; or, *for thy*

2 Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise:

3 Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

4 My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

name's sake, to manifest thy glory in protecting the poor destitute that flies to thee for succour; and judge me by thy strength: strongly interpose in my behalf; and, as my cause is just, be thou my judge, O Lord, and avenge me of mine enemies. Note; (1.) Prayer is a sovereign medicine for every distress. (2.) Salvation cometh from God, and he never faileth those who seek him.

2. He complains of his persecutors. *Strangers are risen up against me*: though they were of his own tribe, and professors of the same religion, yet they acted worse than Philistines; and oppressors, or the mighty men, Saul, Doeg, and the Ziphites, seek after my soul: nothing but his life would gratify their blood-thirsty malice: they have not set God before them; pay no regard to his appointment, forget his all-seeing eye, and disregard the threatenings of his word. Note; (1.) The bitterest enemies of a child of God, are often his nearest neighbours and relations. (2.) When men leave God out of their sight, there is no wickedness too great for them. (3.) Though our spiritual foes seek with more inveterate malice after our souls, than these Ziphites after David, God will not leave us in their hands, if we cleave to him.

2dly, Having commended his cause in prayer to God, we have,

1. The lively profession of his confidence in God. *Behold*, take notice of it, ye children of God, for your encouragement; be admonished, ye sons of wickedness, before it be too late; *God is my helper* against every foe, therefore will I not faint or fear: *the Lord is with them that uphold my soul*; he is my upholder, and the friend of my friends, approving and supporting them in their adherence to me. Note; (1.) They who are faithful to God, shall find that he will raise them up friends in the worst of times. (2.) They who espouse the cause of injured innocence, shall be supported by the God of truth.

2. God's gracious help he promises thankfully to remember. *I will freely sacrifice unto thee*, not only the free-will offerings of bullocks, but the more pleasing oblation of the calves of the lips. *I will praise thy name, for it is good*; gracious, and worthy to be praised; and most becoming him would it be, who had experienced God's goodness, to shew it forth continually.

3. He looks upon his petitions as already accomplished, since faith is in exercise. *He hath delivered me out of all my trouble, and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies*; humbled, and disabled from hurting him.

P S A L. LV.

Title. למנצח בנגינת משכיל לדוד *Lumnatseach l'inginoth maskil ledavid.*] This Psalm was written on account of the perfidy and treason of Achitophel. The Psalmist begins with earnest prayers to God for support and relief, upon account

5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

6 And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! *for then* would I fly away, and be at rest.

7 Lo, *then* would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.

8 I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.

9 Destroy, O LORD, and divide their

account of the greatness of his distress, through the conspiracy which was formed against him under Absalom, and the confusion and clamour, the treachery and violence, which abounded in the city on that unhappy occasion. These made such an impression on his mind, and excited within him such strong apprehensions of his own danger, that he wished, as it were, for the wings of a dove, that he might immediately hasten his escape, from that scene of confusion and wickedness, which excited his abhorrence, and threatened his destruction. The circumstance which gave him peculiar distress, was the baseness and treachery of one, who had been his particular intimate and friend, who loaded him with calumnies, and treacherously joined in the conspiracy against him; and he describes their former mutual friendship by such tender and affecting circumstances, that the reader will scarcely be able to refrain from joining in the imprecations [or prophecies] of the Psalmist, against such a monster of ingratitude and perfidy, and wishing he might be made a public example of the divine vengeance. As to himself, he expresses his firm confidence that God would protect and save him, and that sooner or later he would avenge his cause, and cut off his bloody and deceitful enemies by a sudden and unexpected destruction; as in our version. There are many excellencies in this Psalm. The description of David's own distress is very pathetic, and the occasion of it such as must deeply affect any men of real virtue; viz. the undeserved reproaches with which his enemies loaded him. His wishing for the wings of a dove to carry him into the wilderness, and representing the confusions and violences which were occasioned by the rebellion, under the similitude of a sweeping storm, and furious tempest, is truly poetical. The character and treachery of his false friend is painted in such strong colours, that no one who reads it can help detesting the man, and abhorring his falsehood and treason. His conduct in casting his cares upon God, under all the distresses he was involved in, and his assurance that God would sustain him, and cause him at last to triumph over all his treacherous and bloody enemies, discover his high sentiments of the benevolence and faithfulness of God, and shew us, that the principles of religion will support good men under the greatest afflictions, and most threatening dangers, to which they can be exposed. Chandler. We just observe, that the title of this Psalm, in the Syriac version, tells us, "It is a prophecy of those who sought the destruction of Christ."

Ver. 2. I mourn in my complaint.] I bathe myself with tears in my complaint. Chandler. Compare *Isai. xvi. 2.; Lam. i. 16.* The next words are rendered by Chandler, *and am in the greatest consternation.* He was brought into such immediate danger, that he scarcely knew what method to take to avoid the destruction which threatened him.

Ver. 3. For they cast iniquity upon me.] The Psalmist here declares the causes of his consternation and perplexity. It was upon account of the clamour of his enemies, when the conspiracy against him was strong, and the opposition of the wicked (properly, the presence of the wicked) was round him, so that he had scarcely any way or method of escaping; and because they cast iniquity upon him; properly, they heaped up iniquity upon him, as with a bar, or a lever; to denote the heavy reproaches they threw on him, and the violence of their accusations. Instead of, *they hate me*, we may read, *they set themselves against me.*

Ver. 4. My heart is sore pained.] Trembles.

Ver. 6. And I said, Oh that I had wings! &c.] In the Hebrew, *Who will give me wings like a dove?* The dove is remarkable for the swiftness of its flight; and therefore the Psalmist, who saw himself in the extremest danger, and knew that his very life depended on his immediate escape, wishes for the swift wings of a dove, that he might with the utmost speed fly from the destruction which threatened him. Several writers have taken notice of a fine passage in Seneca's *Octavia*, ver. 915, &c. similar to this.

Quis mea digne deslere potest
Mala? quæ lacrimis nostris questus
Reddet Aëdon? Cujus pennas
Utinam miseræ mihi fata darent!
Fugerem luctus ablata meos
Penna volucris, procul et cætus
Hominum tristes, cædemque feram
Sola in vacuo uenore, et tenui
Ramo pendens, querulo possem
Gutturæ mæltum fundere murmur*.

Ver. 8. From the windy storm and tempest.] From the sweeping wind and furious tempest. Chandler and Mudge.

Ver. 9. Destroy, O Lord, &c.] Confound, or overwhelm them, O Lord, and disjunct their counsels. Chandler. Praying that God would destroy their consultations by dividing them, was the prayer of a wise man, and verified by the event; as the counsels of Achitophel and Hushai were divided, and thereby Achitophel's advice was utterly frus-

* Who can find terms suitable to the lamentation of my evil state? Not even Aëdon † can do justice by her plaint to the tears that I shed! whose wings, indeed, I fain would wear, if the destinies were pleased to grant them. Borne on rapid pinions, I would leave my mourning mates, and avoid the cruel society and persecution of men. Then, sitting solitarily in a grove, perched upon a bending twig, with plaintive throat, I might pour my heavy murmuring notes around.

† The daughter of Pandarus; and wife of king Zethus, who envying Niobe, the wife of Amphion, (her husband's brother) because she had more children than herself, resolved to murder the eldest, who was educated with her own son Itylus; by mistake she killed Itylus, and is fabled as having been changed into a nightingale, that she might sing her child's dirge.

tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.

10 Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow *are* in the midst of it.

11 Wickedness *is* in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.

12 For *it was* not an enemy *that* reproached me; then I could have borne *it*: neither *was it* he that hated me *that* did magnify *himself* against me; then I would have hid myself from him:

13 But *it was* thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

14 We took sweet counsel together, *and*

walked unto the house of God in company.

15 Let death seize upon them, *and* let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness *is* in their dwellings, *and* among them.

16 As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.

17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

18 He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me: for there were many with me.

19 God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.

trated and destroyed. The 10th and 11th verses express in very strong terms the confusion and contention, the deceit and treachery, and other crimes, which abounded in the city by the managers and abettors of this conspiracy. They watched the walls; they resorted to violence and fraud to increase their numbers, and the emissaries of the rebels used every art to alienate the hearts of the people from their king, and engage them in the interests of his unnatural and impious son. Chandler. It plainly appears, says Dr. Delaney, from this Psalm, particularly from ver. 9 to 15. that David had discerned the seeds and workings of a conspiracy in the city, and that Achitophel was at the bottom of it; and not only so, but that David foresaw his sudden and sad end.

Ver. 10. Sorrow] Injury.

Ver. 11. Wickedness is in the midst thereof] The deepest corruptions and distresses are within it.

Ver. 12-14. For it was not an enemy, &c.] Among other persons who joined in this conspiracy against David, there was one from whom he expected a quite different conduct, and whose infidelity and treachery were aggravated by the highest ingratitude. He was reproached by one whom he never suspected as an enemy; that would have been tolerable, and what might have been expected. It was not one who had ever expressed any hatred to him, *that magnified himself against him*; from such a one he would have withdrawn himself, and never have entrusted him with his secrets. This rebellion was raised and encouraged by spreading and propagating false reports concerning David, thereby to disaffect his people to his person and government. The original words *עלי הגדיל* *alai bigdil*, which we render *magnified himself against me*, is rendered by the LXX and Vulgate, *spoke haughtily and disdainfully of me*, by calumniating my administration, and representing me as unfit for, or unworthy to be trusted with, or continued in, the kingdom: an almost constant method to spread disaffection, and spirit up a rebellion against the wisest and best of princes. The word *כערכי* *keerki*, rendered *mine equal*, signifies properly, *like myself*; one whom I looked upon as almost in the same rank with myself, and honoured and esteemed as my equal: and the word *אלרפי* *allurpi*, rendered *my guide*,

signifies an *intimate familiar friend*. Prov. xvii. 19. The true version of the first clause of the 14th verse is, *We sweetly enjoyed our mutual secrets*; one of the highest privileges and pleasures of friendship. We may observe here, that this description answers perfectly well to Achitophel, whom David had used as his counsellor and friend, and to whom he had committed his most important secrets; and accordingly the Chaldee paraphrase expressly names Achitophel as the person intended; *And thou, Achitophel, a man like to myself*. Chandler. As David bears the character of Jesus Christ in the type, and Achitophel of Judas, the application of this passage to the treachery of the latter is manifest. See more in the REFLECTIONS at the end of the Psalm.

Ver. 15. Let death seize upon them, &c.] Death shall exact the debt with usury; they shall descend alive into hades. This version is from Cocceius; and Dr. Chandler well remarks, that it preserves the propriety of the original verb, and greatly adds to the force of the expression. The verb is in the future tense, and therefore should not be rendered as an execration; for it only points out what would be the punishment of such perfidy and wickedness. This was verified by the event, as Achitophel hanged himself, and went down as it were *alive* into hades.

Ver. 18. He hath delivered my soul] He will redeem my soul from their conflict with me, and restore me to peace; for with multitudes they came against me. Chandler. Houbigant renders it, *He will restore my soul in peace from him who makes war on me, though there are many against me*.

Ver. 19. Even he that abideth of old] Even he who reigns from everlasting. Chandler, after Cocceius. The introducing God as reigning of old, and holding the government of the world from before all ages, has great propriety, and was one of the principal considerations which established David's hope in God, that he would deliver him from this unnatural rebellion. *Because they have no changes*, is rendered by Chandler, *They think of no succeeding changes*; that is, "They are prosperous, and have no reverse of fortune. "think of none, and fear none; and so fear not God." David's enemies had succeeded, driven him from his capital and throne; thought themselves secure, and had no apprehension or fear from the power or providence of God.

20 He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him : he hath broken his covenant.

21 *The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war *was* in his heart : his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords.

22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee : he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction : bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days ; but I will trust in thee.

God. Schultens gives the words this sense ; “ *They expect no succession, either of a better life or economy ; i. e. a better state of things here or hereafter.*” Some render it : *They are not changed, and they fear no God.* And Mudge reads the whole verse, *God shall hear, and he that abideth of old, with whom are no changes, shall humble them, since they fear not God :* as much as to say, “ That immutable Being (with a glance at the infidelity of men) who was always faithful to his promises and friends, would support him, and humble them.”

Ver. 20. He hath broken his covenant] He hath profaned, and violated his covenant ; namely, of allegiance and friendship.

Ver. 21. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, &c.] Smooth and deceitful are the buttery words of his mouth ; but war is in his heart : his speeches are softer than oil ; but they are drawn swords. See Chandler and Houbigant.

*Ver. 22. Cast thy burthen upon the Lord] Cast thou thy cares and projects upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee, and bring them to perfection : He will not permit the righteous to be moved for ever. Chandler. The meaning of the word יְבִבְקָה *yebabeka*, seems to be, what is given us from God, our allotment : Compare 1 Pet. v. 7.*

REFLECTIONS ON VERSES 12—15. *Is it not a grief unto death, when a companion and friend is turned to an enemy ? says the son of Sirach. There can be little question, that if a faithful friend be the medicine of life, the loss of such a cordial, or the absence of it, must prove the very bitterness of grief. Job himself was shaken, when he found that his familiar friends were not ashamed to make themselves strange to him ; but his calamity was at the highest, and he knew not how to carry his complaint further, than that all his inward friends abhorred him, and they whom he loved were turned against him. Indeed, the distresses and dangers that we are subject to, are hardly remediable, except by God, when they, who by intimate conversation know our nature, and to whom we have communicated our counsels and designs, prove false to us, and concur with the malice of our enemies. When they instruct our adversaries, who are to treat with us, what advantage to make of our hopes and our fears, and of those infirmities of nature which none but our bosom-friends could discern ; when, upon the information and advertisement they give as friends, they lead us to such and such conclusions and resolutions, and then betray those resolutions to them against whom they are taken ; there can hardly be shelter from such treachery : we may very well lose our courage, and be even overwhelmed with the fear and horror of the danger which has encompassed us, unless remarkably supported by grace. As the danger is almost inevitable, so the grief which attends*

it is sharper and more troublesome than the danger. The discovered treachery of a friend does at once astonish all the faculties of the mind, and render them useless ; and when we recover sense enough to find that we are hurt, and consider the hand which has done it, we are so confounded with grief, with sorrow and shame, and even with our own love and pity towards the apostates, that we can hardly think of the natural remedies and applications. David was so lost and confounded at the unkindness of Absalom's rebellion, that he could not compose himself to make any preparation or provision for resistance and opposition ; and all his senses were so engrossed, and possessed with the agony and smart of his unnatural conduct, that he felt not the treason and malice of Shimei's reproaches, though he had made war with his hands, as well as his tongue, and threw stones at him as well as cursed him, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. *Behold ! my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life : how much more now may this Benjamite do it ! let him alone, and let him curse,* says the overwhelmed father, when he might have had justice done upon the profane and wicked captive. And we may very reasonably and safely believe, that our Saviour himself sustained much more trouble from the combination and treachery of Judas in the betraying him, than from all the indignities and violence offered to him by the Jews. The Scribes and Pharisees did like themselves, and like the persons they professed to be ; and Pilate proceeded with as much tenderness, as was naturally to be expected : He would fain have found expedients to save him ; and the people were madder, and more importunate for mischief, than they used to be :—But that a *disciple, and an apostle,—one whom he had trusted above others, should contribute to, and contrive his destruction,* gave him more than ordinary trouble : at the thoughts of it, *He was troubled in Spirit,* John, xiii. 21. He knew the extreme grief it would occasion to all the rest of his disciples, who might reasonably suspect the faith of each other, and apprehend they might be all suspected by him, when one who had appeared as innocent and zealous as any, had been corrupted to so odious a perfidy—the mischief that we suffer by the treachery and falsehood of those we love, being commonly improved, and thereby made incurable, by our being jealous of every body, and thoroughly trusting none, after we have been so horribly abused by those whom we thought we might trust best, and with more security ; and therefore confusion and ruin usually enter at those breaches. But our comfort is, though we are least able to help ourselves in such exigencies, and against such distresses, we have a Helper, if we call faithfully upon Him, who sees the pangs that we suffer, the agony and fear that we endure, and hears our lamentations.

P S A L. LVI.

David, praying to God in confidence of his word, complaineth of his enemies: he professeth his confidence in God's word, and promiseth to praise him.

To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elim-rechokim, Mich-tam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.

BE merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

2 Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.

3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

4 In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

5 Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil.

6 They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

7 Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.

8 Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?

P S A L. LVI.

Title. יונת אלם רחוקים על יונת אלם רחוקים. *al ionath eilem rechokiim.* Upon Jonath-elim-rechokim] Upon the silent dove afar off. Or, according to Bochart, "To the tune of the dove in the remote woods." Thus David might call himself, when, after many wanderings, he got into the forest of Hareth; where he had leisure to reflect upon what was past, and to compose this psalm. Fenwick would render it, "Concerning the oppression of the handful, or little flock afar off;" i. e. the little flock of true believers dispersed among the Gentiles. The psalm is well suited to the occasion on which the inscription says it was written, and which is related 1 Sam. xxi. David begins it by imploring the protection of God, on account of the many enemies waiting for his destruction; ver. 1, 2. who wrested his words, and narrowly watched all his actions, that they might find some pretence to cut him off: ver. 5, 6. but he encourages himself by trust in God, and rests assured that he will deliver him, and give him renewed occasions of acknowledging his faithfulness, and celebrating his praises.

Ver. 1. For man would swallow me up] The word שפאפחני, rendered swallow me up, properly signifies to breathe, to pant after, to draw, or snuff the air; and from thence hunt, by drawing in and following the scent of the air. And as hunting ends in the capture and destruction of the prey, it further denotes to swallow up and devour: and it is rendered in our version by panting, snuffing up, swallowing up, and devouring, and other words of the like nature. Dr. Chandler renders it by eagerly hunting after; which perfectly agrees with the character and conduct of Saul, who furiously pursued and hunted after David to destroy him.

Ver. 2. They be many that fight against me, &c.] The word מרומ marom, rendered O thou most High, is not found any where singly applied to God. It generally signifies a high place; and when applied to persons, it denotes their superior elevation, as to dwelling and station. See Ps. xcii. 8. xciii. 4. Isai. xxiv. 21. Eccles. x. 6. It should be rendered, In high places, or stations. David might well complain, that those who fought against him were in high stations, since his enemies were Saul and his officers; and when he fled from them, Achish, and the princes of

the Philistines, among whom he promised himself a safe retreat. Chandler. Mudge renders it, *With a high hand.*

Ver. 4. In God I will praise his word] Truth, and faithfulness to his promises, are attributes which dwell in, or belong to God. God had promised David the kingdom of Israel, and therefore in God he would praise his word or promise: i. e. under his protection and by trusting in his power, even amidst the greatest enemies, he would celebrate the praises of his truth and goodness; not doubting but that God would, in due time, accomplish his promise: for it follows, *In God will I trust; I will not fear what man can do.*

Ver. 5. They wrest my words] They pervert, torture, &c. Chandler, &c. That is, they endeavour to squeeze from my words, as it were by torture, any sense that they please, contrary to the intention of the speaker. See Delaney's Life of David, b. i. c. 11.

Ver. 6. They gather themselves together] They secretly gather together to ensnare me: they observe my steps, for they wait for my life. That is, "they have their secret meetings and consultations how they may most effectually ensnare me, and work my ruin."

Ver. 7. Shall they escape by iniquity?] As much as to say, by way of admiration: "Strange! that their iniquity should deliver them." He adds therefore, *In anger bring down, O Lord, this people:* "Shew [or, thou shalt shew] thy displeasure to their crimes, by inflicting the just punishment on them." Chandler. Mudge renders the first clause, *Their refuge is in vanity.*

Ver. 8. Thou tellest my wanderings] David's whole life, from his victory over Goliath till the death of Saul, was almost entirely spent in wandering from place to place. He was now in exile at Gath; he comforts himself, however, that God was with him wherever he fled; and beheld, as no unconcerned spectator, the distresses of his unhappy situation. He therefore adds, *put my tears into thy bottle;* which seems to intimate, that the custom of putting tears into the ampulla, or urna lacrymales, so well known among the Romans, was more anciently in use among the eastern nations, and particularly among the Hebrews. These urns were of different materials; some of glass, some of earth, as may be seen in Montfaucon's Antiqu. Expliquées, tom. v. p. 116. where also may be found the

various

9 When I cry *unto thee*, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God *is* for me.

10 In God will I praise *his* word: in the LORD will I praise *his* word.

11 In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

12 Thy vows *are* upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death: *wilt* not *thou deliver* my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living.

various forms or shapes of them. These *urns* were placed on the sepulchres of the deceased, as a memorial of the distress and affection of their surviving relations and friends. It will be difficult to account for the expression of the Psalmist, but upon the supposition. If this be allowed, when the Psalmist prays *put my tears into thy bottle*, the meaning will be, "Let my distress, and the tears I have shed in consequence of it, be ever before thee; excite thy kind remembrance of me, and plead with thee to grant the relief that I stand in need of." The allusion is pertinent and expressive. The next expression, *are they not in thy book?* denotes the confidence which the Psalmist placed in the kind regard of God towards him, as though he took an account of every tear that he shed, and would in due time remember and comfort him. See Chandler and Calmet.

Ver. 12. Thy vows are upon me, O God] That is, "I am under the obligation of vows to God; and therefore will return my acknowledgments to thee." See Pf. xxxiv. 1. and Chandler.

Ver. 13. That I may walk before God in the light of the living] i. e. "Serve God, whilst I enjoy the common light of mankind; or during the whole of my future life."

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The arms of Divine mercy are ever open to the miserable; thither therefore David flees.

1. He complains of his enemies. They designed nothing less than his utter ruin. Their attacks were restless and incessant; too numerous, as well as mighty, for him to contend with. *Note*; (1.) A child of God must ever expect to meet the enmity of a world which lieth in wickedness. (2.) Every eye is upon the steps of the godly, with eagerness waiting for their halting, every ear ready to catch their words, and artful to misrepresent them to their prejudice: let them take the greater heed to their ways. (3.) The tempter and accuser of the brethren is ceaseless in his snares; and the more abundantly need we watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation. (4.) However divided wicked men are among themselves, they can ever cordially unite to oppose and oppress the faithful followers of Jesus.

2. In his trouble, David directs his prayer to God. *Be merciful unto me*; could he obtain that petition, the malice of his foes should not be able to prevail. *Note*; We have no demand on God for aught; our only plea is for mercy through the Redeemer, and that includes all that we can wish or need.

3. He encourages his heart in God. Fearful he sometimes was; but he has a never-failing resource, even the *Most High*. His word would comfort, his power protect him: on this rock therefore his confidence fixes, and thence defies the impotent enmity of man. *Note*; (1.) Faith is then most needful, when the storm of temptation is highest.

(2.) Trials drive the faithful bearer to God, as the tree shaken by the wind takes firmer and deeper root.

4. He expresses his confidence of the approaching ruin of the wicked. *Shall they escape by iniquity?* no: though they promise themselves impunity, and think they are so great and above controul, yet God will not suffer them to go unpunished. *Note*; None are too great for God to humble; none so secure or daring, but he will make them feel his arm.

2dly, Though the world frowns, if God smiles, we may well be comforted. Thus was the Psalmist in the midst of his trials.

1. He had confidence of God's notice and kind compassions towards him in his distress: not a weary step he took, but the Lord watched over it; not a tear he dropped, but, as precious, it was preserved in God's bottle. *Note*; (1.) The tears of God's people here below have often cause to flow; shortly they shall be for ever wiped away from their eyes. (2.) Not a tear drops from the eye of his afflicted ones, but the Father of mercies regards and remembers it. (3.) They who have caused the griefs of God's suffering faints will shortly find every tear that they have drawn productive of a deluge of wrath upon their own heads.

2. He was assured that God would hear his cry, and help him. However mighty or numerous his foes, God was for him, and therefore the victory secure. *Note*; Whatever enemies without beset, or within war against us, the prayer of faith is all-prevailing, and every believer knows it by experience.

3. He repeats with exultation the profession that he had before made. No fear shall distress him; faith shall strengthen him, not only to pray, but praise. *Note*; They who have God for them, may well contemn the impotent threats of man, who is a worm.

4. He had vowed, and would pay the bounden sacrifices of praise. Past mercies demanded that grateful tribute, and future ones, which he expected, would still increase his obligation. In deaths oft, he had been hitherto preserved; and shall not the same power and grace protect him still? *Note*; (1.) Every christian has vows upon him; baptismal, sacramental; let them be often and solemnly remembered, to quicken us to our bounden duty of praise and holiness. (2.) Our souls by sin are now spiritually dead, and liable to eternal death; it is a deliverance, indeed, deserving of our everlasting acknowledgement, if by his Son God hath redeemed and by his Spirit hath quickened us; then we may well rejoice in hope of partaking his eternal glory among the faints in light. (3.) We walk in a slippery path, our tottering footsteps weak, and often thrust at that we should fall; if amid such danger we are preserved, not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise.

P S A L. LVII.

David, in prayer fleeing unto God, complaineth of his dangerous case; he encourageth himself to praise God.

To the chief Musician, Al-tafchith, Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.

BE merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

2 I will cry unto God most High; unto God, that performeth all things for me.

3 He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

P S A L. LVII.

Title. אל תשחית *Al-tafchith*] Destroy not. This psalm is thus intitled, because some of David's men, observing the advantage that he had over Saul, would fain have dispatched him, if David had not forbidden the person who was ready to strike the blow, saying, *Destroy not*. The same title is prefixed to the two following, and to the 76th psalm, most probably to shew that they were to be sung to the same tune. See the history referred to 1 Sam. xxiv.

Ver. 2. Unto God, that performeth all things for me] To the Divinity that completely covereth me all over: literally, that perfecteth all over, or around me: "That completely shelters me all around, namely, under his wing." Mudge: and compare Pf. cxxxviii. 8. Dr. Chandler observes, that the word גמיע *gomeir* rendered *performeth*, signifies to perfect and consummate, or to do every thing necessary for a person in his particular station and character. Thus in the Syriac version of the New Testament the word is used of Christ's being made perfect by sufferings; Heb. xiii. 2. and this rendering well suits the place before us. "It is God who effectually doth every thing concerning me: that is, which is necessary to my safety."

Ver. 3. He shall send from heaven, and save me, &c.] He will send from heaven, and save me: He despiseth him who cometh upon me with open mouth: God shall send forth his favour and truth: though I lie with my soul among lions: ver. 4. The sons of men are all on fire: their teeth spears, &c. Mudge. Others read, He hath put to shame him who would swallow me up, &c. ver. 4. My soul, I lie among lions: the sons of men are set on fire, their teeth are spears, &c. compare Pf. lix. 7. The reader will observe, that mercy and truth are here poetically represented as ministers of God; standing in his presence, ready to execute his pleasure, and employed by him in the salvation of his people.

Ver. 5. Be thou exalted, O God, &c.] "Manifest thyself to be the Lord of heaven and earth, by delivering me from this imminent danger." The verse may be rendered, Exalt, O God, above the heavens, above all the earth, thy glory.

Ver. 6. They have prepared a net for my steps] The syntax

4 My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.

6 They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.

7 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

8 Awake up my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.

9 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the

here is thought to be irregular; but the literal rendering is, *They have prepared a net for their steps: he boweth down my soul*; referring to Saul, at the head of his troops, pursuing David to his ruin. This makes the construction regular; and the sense in connection will be, "They have prepared a net for me, that he (namely, Saul) may bow down my soul: may cause me to fall into the snare which is laid for me." Chandler.

Ver. 7. My heart is fixed] Or, prepared, as in the Margin of our Bibles. He says, in the conclusion of the foregoing verse, that his enemies had fallen into the pit which they had prepared for him; as Saul, who sought his life, had fallen in the cave into David's hands, and put his life in his power. Therefore, in the triumph of his joy, he cries out, "My heart is fixed, and prepared to celebrate God's goodness:" and his repeating the words adds great emphasis to them.

Ver. 8. Awake up, my glory, &c.] *My tongue*, Pf. xvi. 9. xxx. 12. The Psalmist, in the next clause, by an elegant figure, calls upon his psaltery, or harp, as if they were endued with life, to awake with him; and, as it were, of themselves to join with him in making melody to God, and resounding his praise.—So Horace applies to his lyre:

—Age, dic Latinum,
Barbite, carmen.

Od. b. i. 32.

Come, and to Latian song, my lyre, adapt thy sound.

The reader will observe how suitable this psalm is to the circumstances of David which gave occasion to it. When he represents himself as encompassed with lions, or merciless men inflamed with rage, seeking his destruction, and laying snares for his ruin; in such a situation we cannot fail to admire the firmness of his hope in God, and full assurance of his deliverance, and can scarcely refrain from joining with him in the triumph of his gratitude, when his distresses were overpast; *My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready; I will sing and give praise*. Nor can we avoid being pleased with the images of taking refuge under the shadow of God's wings; of God's making truth and mercy the ministers of salvation to his people; of his address to his

people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.

10 For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.

11 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.

his psaltery and harp; and his representation of God's dominion, extending to the heavens and the earth. See Chandler. The last clause of the verse may be rendered, *I will awake the morning.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We might have thought that David, when hunted as a partridge in the mountain, would have little time for prayer and praise, and that his harp would be hung on the willows; but when forced to fly to a cave for shelter, his soul more ardently fled to God for help and hope.

1. He describes his enemies as lions, such were Saul and his forces, furious and raging to swallow him up. *Note;* (1.) The tongue of secret slander is more hurtful than the sword of an open enemy. (2.) They who now in raging lusts and passions are set on fire of hell, must shortly burn there. (3.) The blessed Jesus was thus beset when seized by his bloody persecutors; and his people still, in many circumstances of opposition and temptation, can often with feeling propriety adopt these words, *My soul is among lions.*

2. His recourse is ever to God under his wants, and to him he never seeks in vain; he was bowed down, his calamities great; therefore he pleads that God would shew him mercy, and manifest his own glory in his protection, and the disappointment of his enemies; and, as he resolved to persevere in his supplications, he expected continually an answer of peace. *Note;* (1.) While we are praying for the mercies that we need, it becomes us to have an eye ever to God's glory, as what should be dearer to us than our own safety. (2.) Ceaseless prayer on earth is our duty; in heaven it will be exchanged for everlasting praise.

3. He cheerfully in faith commits his body and soul to God's sure keeping. The shadow of his wings was his refuge; under them he trusted he should be hid, till every storm was overpast. The Most High was able to preserve him, he had committed himself to his care, and expected the performance of his promises; while his enemies, exposed to deserved wrath, would fall into the pit which they had digged, and God would be magnified in the just judgments executed upon them. *Note;* (1.) The promise of God is a surer defence than a shield of adamant. (2.) They who have a heart to trust God, will ever find him faithful that hath promised. (3.) Whatever reproach lights on us upon earth, if we have the favour of God, we need not fear the revilings of men. (4.) The wicked, through God's just judgment, often perish in the snare which they laid for others.

P S A L. LVIII.

David, reproving wicked judges, describeth the nature of the wicked, and devoteth them to God's judgments, whereat the righteous shall rejoice.

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David.

DO ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?

2dly, Rising as it were from his knees, the Psalmist's believing heart, enraptured, bursts into a song of praise. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, or prepared, fixed in confident dependance, prepared for every danger; my troubles vanish, and songs of gratitude and love flow from my heart. I will sing and give praise; awake up my glory, arise my soul, shake off dull sloth, and leave thy sorrows far behind; awake psaltery and harp, no longer mute, your swelling notes shall join my joyful song. I myself will awake early, prevent the dawn of day, eager to proclaim the praises of my God. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people, among the first of thy congregation my grateful voice shall be heard; I will sing unto thee among the nations, though driven to heathen lands, will never be silent or ashamed to tell the glories of Jehovah; for thy mercy, which I have experienced, is great unto the heavens, beyond expression or conception, and thy truth unto the clouds, thy faithfulness inviolable in every promise, extending to the faithful not only through time but to eternity. Be thou exalted, therefore, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth; let the manifestations of it appear to the admiration of men and angels, and all the hosts above join to adore thy great name, exalted above all blessing and praise. Note;* (1.) In God's worship our whole soul should be engaged, fixed attention should keep our wandering thoughts, enlivened devotion drive away all stupor and heaviness, and heart and voice unite in the blessed service. (2.) They who rejoice in God themselves, desire to diffuse their joys around, and induce others to come and taste their mercies, and join their songs. (3.) How feeble now are our warmest efforts, and how little a while can our affections fix intensely on the divine subject! Blessed be God, the faithful have a hope above the heavens, where their souls shall be seraphic as the song, and never faulter or be weary in the work of everlasting praise.

P S A L. LVIII.

Title. תשחית אל at tascheth.] Bishop Patrick observes, that the order of time, in placing this, the former, and the following psalms, is inverted; for the occasion of the 59th was first. Then, upon Saul's missing David, he supposes him to have called his council together; when they, to ingratiate themselves with the reigning prince, adjudged David to be guilty of treason in aspiring to the throne of Israel; which he thinks to have been the occasion of this psalm. And this was prior to what happened in the cave which gave occasion to the last psalm.

Ver. 1. Do ye indeed speak righteousness, &c.] *Truth.*—O congregation, that is, "Ye courtiers assembled in council."

2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness: ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lyes.

4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: *they are* like the deaf adder *that* stoppeth her ear;

5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.

“cil.” *Ye sons of men*, signifies, “Ye rulers of the people.” See Pf. viii. 4.

Ver. 2. Ye work wickedness, &c.] You work wickedness on the earth; your hands frame violence.

Ver. 3. The wicked are estranged from the womb] This is a strong hyperbole, a figure often used, as it is here, with great elegance by the finest writers; when, to be more expressive, they speak in such terms as apparently exceed the strict matter of fact. St. John does the same thing, when he says, If all our Saviour’s miracles and actions were to be recorded, *The world itself would not contain the books which should be written*: i. e. The account of them would be exceedingly long and large. But in one sense, we may add, *all men* are estranged from God from the womb: all are fallen.

Ver. 4. Like the deaf adder, &c.] Dr. Hammond observes from Schindler, that “the *deaf viper*, or *adder*, is so called, because, being deaf of one ear, he useth to stop the other with dust, or with his tail, to avoid the force of the charms or incantations wherewith he is wont to be caught.” And then, from Philostratus, he gives us an account of their manner of catching certain dragons or serpents in India; part of which is, that “they use certain charms to them, by which they are induced to come out of their holes, and are lulled to sleep, and then the charmers take that opportunity, and cut off their heads. For the avoiding of which danger, *the deaf adder*, so called because he hears but with one, is supposed to stop the other ear, and so secure himself.” Whether there be exact truth in this, is not material to the Psalmist’s use of it, or to the explaining the meaning of this allusion; which, as from a thing vulgarly believed, sets forth the matter in hand, the imperiusableness of wicked men. Thus far the Doctor. And certain it is, says a modern writer upon the Psalms, that the common adder or viper, here in England, the bite of which too, by the way, is very venomous, if it be not wholly *deaf*, has the sense of hearing very imperfectly. This is evident from the danger there is of treading upon these animals, unless you happen to see them; for if they do not see you, and you do not disturb them, they never endeavour to avoid you, which when they are disturbed, and do see you, they are very solicitous of doing. Allowing, then, that there is a species of these noxious animals, which, either not having the sense of hearing at all, or having it only in a small degree, may very well be said to be deaf; this may help to explain the present poetical passage of the Psalmist. He very elegantly compares the pernicious and destructive practices of wicked men, to the venom of a serpent; and his mentioning the species of animals seems to have brought to his mind another property of at least one sort of them, in which they likewise resembled perverse and obstinate sinners, who are

deaf to all advice, utterly irreclaimable, and not to be persuaded. This the adder finely resembled, which is a very venomous animal, and moreover is deaf, or very near it. And perhaps his saying that *she stoppeth her ears*, may be no more than a poetical expression for deafness: just as the *mole*, which, in common speech, is said to be *blind*, might in a poetical phrase, be said to shut her eyes; as in fact she does when you expose her to the light. The next clause, *Which refuseth to hear*, &c. is another poetical expression for the same thing; and it may not be amiss to add here, that there certainly were people in former times, who made it their business, or at least pretended to have some power over these animals, by virtue of musical sounds, or the repetition of sundry verses. Neither is it at all improbable, that music should have a considerable and surprising effect over them. That it really had, appears from several other passages of Scripture. In Eccles. x. 11. Solomon says, *Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment*; and God himself declares, by the prophet Jeremiah, ch. viii. 17. *Behold, I will send serpents which will not be charmed*: Agreeable to which, the author of Eccles. xii. 13. asks, *Who will pity a charmer that is bitten with a serpent?* The heathen poets also frequently allude to the same thing. Virgil does it more than once:

*Strains, in the meadow, or the secret brake,
Can the deaf adder split, and venom’d snake.*

Ecl. viii. ver. 71.

and in the 7th Æneid, ver. 753. speaking of *Umbro*, the priest of Marruvia, he has this remarkable passage:

*His charms in peace the furious serpent keep,
And lull th’ envenom’d viper’s race to sleep,
His healing hand allay’d the raging pain;
And at his touch the poisons fled again.*

The 5th verse is a poetical application of this allusion to the Psalmist’s purpose; viz. to shew, that the obstinate and perverse sinner is wilfully deaf to the best advice, though given by the most able person, and in the most judicious manner. To speak a little physically in this matter: As these animals, by the natural imperfection of that sense, are unaccustomed to hear common noises, may they not be more likely to be affected by such sounds as may be more particularly adapted to make an impression upon their organs of hearing?—They who would know more of the subject, may consult Scheuchzer, and Calmet’s dissertation upon the place. For my own part, I cannot help conceiving, that the Psalmist does not allude to any natural deafness of the adder, (which appears to be a very disputable point,) but to an artificial deafness, arising from its fury, its unwillingness to hear and to regard any of the usual methods of taming it, when irritated, and in a rage; and, indeed, this seems to be most applicable to the point in

6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth : break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.

7 Let them melt away as waters which run continually : when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.

8 As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away : like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.

9 Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.

10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance : he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is

a reward for the righteous : verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

P S A L. LIX.

David prayeth to be delivered from his enemies : he complaineth of their cruelty : he trusteth in God : he prayeth [or propheseth] against them : he praiseth God.

To the chief Musician, Altschith, Michtam of David ; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

DELIVER me from mine enemies, O my God : defend me from them that rise up against me.

2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul : the mighty are gathered against me ; not for my

in comparison. Accordingly, the French version renders it in this sense ; *Their fury is like that of the serpent, and asp, which makes herself deaf, by stopping her ears : ver. 5. And which hears not the voice, &c.*

Ver. 6. Break their teeth, O God] The mention of teeth in this first place with the relative *their*, most probably refers to the adder's or serpent's immediately foregoing, whose poison and noxious power is in their teeth ; and the way to disarm serpents is to deprive them of their teeth. They who keep serpents tame usually do this by putting to them a piece of red cloth, in which they love to fix their teeth, and so draw them out. *Breaking* them is equivalent to drawing them out. This mention of teeth fairly introduces that which follows concerning the lions, whose power of doing mischief with them is more violent ; and so signifies the open and riotous offender, as the serpent's teeth may imply the more secret and indiscernible wounds of the whisperer or back-biter ; which yet are as dangerous and destructive as the former, by the smallest puncture killing him on whom they fasten.

Ver. 7. When he bendeth his bow, &c.] *When they would shoot their arrows, let them be as it were without arms.* Mudge. See Pf. lxiv. 3, 4.

Ver. 8. As a snail which melteth, &c.] *Like the snail which dissolveth, let them flow away ; like the untimely birth of a woman, that never saw the sun.* Houbigant and Mudge.

Ver. 9. Before your pots can feel the thorns] *Sooner than the bramble can heat your pots, let God's wrath, like a stormy wind, sweep them away.* See Bishop Hare and Green. The author of the *Observations* remarks, that among the Arabs, the use of thorns, furze, and things of that kind, is commonly used for any thing which requires quick heating ; and, as it is short-lived, so it is remarkably violent. See p. 141. and Eccles. vii. 6. According to Grotius, the Hebrew may be rendered, *Before your pots can perceive or feel the thorns ; (i. e. a fire made of thorns, which burns with great fury, and soon gives heat to any thing ;) so likewise shall the anger of God snatch you away, as it were in a whirlwind.* The intention of the Psalmist is, to express

both the quick and terrible destruction of the wicked. They were to be taken away suddenly, or rapidly, before the pots could feel the soon-kindling and vehement fire of thorns. They were to be taken off by some terrible catastrophe, like the furious burning of thorns, to which the wrath of God is frequently compared. See Ezek. ii. 6.

Ver. 10. The righteous shall rejoice] Not from a mere complacency in the destruction of his enemies, but from a zeal for the glory of God, which is thereby displayed. *He shall wash his feet, &c.* is an allusion to a great conqueror, who, upon returning with a complete victory from the slaughter of his enemies, dips his feet in their blood as he passes over their carcases.

P S A L. LIX.

Title. אל תשחת אל at tashcheth.] This psalm is a noble vindication of David's innocence, in that he could, in the most private retirement, and upon the most serious and deliberate reflection, thus solemnly appeal to God, that he was not chargeable with the least perfidy, wickedness, or crime, which could excite the hatred of his enemies, and give occasion to Saul to pursue him with such eagerness and malice to his destruction, ver. 3, 4. For he represents them as falsely defaming him, running to prepare themselves and execute Saul's commands ; as some of them besetting his house by night, and like snarling dogs ready to bite, threatening to lay hold of and murder him ; whilst others went about the city to prevent any possible way of escaping ; so that, according to the history, Michal was forced to let him down through the window to secure his retreat. He, therefore, earnestly prays for God's protection ; declares that his dependance for safety was on his power ; assures himself that God would defend him ; and resolves to celebrate the praises of him who had been his refuge and security in the time of danger. Chandler.

Ver. 3. The mighty are gathered against me] *The mighty are turned aside to lay snares against me.* See Pfal. lvi. 6. Chandler.

Tem

transgression, nor *for* my sin, O LORD.

4 They run and prepare themselves without *my* fault: awake to help me, and behold.

5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.

6 They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords *are* in their lips: for who, *say they*, doth hear?

8 But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

9 *Because of his strength* will I wait upon thee: for God *is* my defence.

10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see *my desire* upon mine enemies.

11 Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them

down, O LORD our shield.

12 *For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips*, let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying *which they speak*.

13 Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may not be*: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

14 And at evening let them return; *and* let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

15 Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.

16 But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble,

17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God *is* my defence, *and* the God of my mercy.

Ver. 4. They run and prepare themselves] i. e. Diligently and eagerly set about my destruction.

Ver. 5. Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors] Literally, *the prevaricators of wickedness*; i. e. such as are guilty of great treachery and perfidiousness.

Ver. 6. They return at evening] Saul sent once to destroy him, and the messengers went back to inform him that he was ill; but they returned in the evening, to bring him even in his bed. Mudge renders it, *They come about every evening*. The verb rendered, *make a noise*, in the next clause, is used to denote the confused hum and noise of an assembled croud. The Psalmist compares the muttered threats of his enemies to the growlings or snarlings of a dog, ready to bite and tear any person; and the comparison is just and natural.

Ver. 7. They belch out] The original verb *בָּעָבָה* *bangab*, properly signifies the bubbling noise of water rising out of a spring. Hence it is used in a good and bad sense of what is uttered by the mouth, according as that is good or evil. In the good sense we have it, Prov. i. 23. In the place before us, it is taken in the bad sense, and denotes those numerous threatenings, calumnies, and imprecations, which David's pursuers poured out against him. *Swords are in their lips*, says he. Their threatenings were cruel and deadly: Pf. lvii. 4. and the calumnies which they privately insinuated to Saul, such as made him determine his destruction, especially as David had not the liberty of vindicating himself. Therefore it is added, *For who heareth?* They vented their calumnies more freely and dangerously, because privately; so that none could refute them. Chandler.

Ver. 9. Because of his strength, &c.] Cocceius in his Lexicon gives the expression this turn; *I, whose strength is in Thee, will observe*, namely, how my God will act; or *I will observe, and expect his aid*; which agrees well with the

following words, *God is my defence*. But I think the more easy and natural version is, *As for his strength, I will observe, or look to Thee*. "Saul's soldiers give me no concern; my eyes are towards Thee; for God is my refuge." Chandler. Many commentators approve the version of the liturgy; *My strength will I ascribe unto thee*, which is agreeable to a variety of the ancient versions. Bishop Hare thinks that the last verse of this psalm is only a more correct reading of this; and Mr. Pilkington is of the same opinion. See his Remarks, p. 36.

Ver. 10. God shall let me see, &c.] The word rendered *enemies* in this verse properly signifies *insidious men*, who craftily observed and lay in wait for him. David says, *God will cause me to see amongst them*; i. e. to discover their plots and contrivances to ruin me; that they may not prove fatal to me; or, to see them fall by the destruction which they intend me.

Ver. 11. Slay them not, &c.] *Wilt thou not cut them off? Lest my people forget thee, cause them to shake by thy power, and bring them down to destruction, O Lord, our shield.* Chandler.

Ver. 12. For the sin of their mouth, &c.] *The sin of their mouth is the word of their lips; and they shall be taken in their pride, and for perjury and lying which they speak.*

Ver. 14. And at evening let them return] This is a repetition of the 6th verse, but is to be understood in a different sense: The 6th verse is a real complaint of their fury and diligence in pursuing him; here he speaks of them with a kind of indifference and contempt; and as free from any apprehension of danger from them. "Let them, if they please, return in the evening, growl at me like dogs, and watch all the avenues of the city to take me: Yet like greedy dogs they shall want their food and wander about, as though shivering for hunger; for they shall not be

P S A L. LX.

David complaining to God of former judgment, now, upon better hope, prayeth for deliverance: comforting himself in God's promises, he requesteth that help whereon he trusteth.

To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth, Michtam of David, to teach; when he strove with Aram-naharain, and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom, in the Valley of Salt, twelve thousand.

O GOD, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeas'd;

O turn thyself to us again.

2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.

3 Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

4 Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.

"satisfied, but mutmur on account of their disappointment." The 15th verse should be rendered, *They shall wander about, shivering for hunger, and because not satisfied they shall mutmur.* See Chandler and Houbigant.

P S A L. LX.

Title. *על שושן עדות* *al Shushan eduth.* Upon Shushan-eduth, &c.] See on Pf. xxii. Houbigant renders it, *Upon the hexachord of the testimony.* Others render it, *Upon the lily of the testimony; Michtam, or golden psalm of David.* We here subjoin some further remarks on the titles of the Psalms by the author of the *Observations.* D'Herbelot, says he, observes, that "the works of seven of the most excellent Arab poets who flourished before the times of Mohammedanism, were called *Al Modllacat*, because they were successively fixed by way of honour to the gate of the temple of Mecca; and also *Al-Modhabehat*; which signifies gilded or golden, because they were written in letters of gold upon Egyptian paper:" and in a following page the same writer informs us, that the Arabs, when they would praise any one's poems, were wont to say, "These are the *golden verses* of such or such a one;" which he seems to suppose was derived from the writing of these poems in letters of gold. Now, might not the present psalm, and those five others which are distinguished by the same epithet, be called *golden*, on account of their having been, on some occasion or other, written in letters of gold, and hung up in the sanctuary, or elsewhere? Not (it may be) on account of their being judged to have a superior excellence to the other hymns of this collection, absolutely speaking, but on account of their being suited to some particular circumstances which might occasion their being treated with this distinction. Hezekiah, we know, went up to the house of the Lord, and spread the letter of Sennacherib before him there; *Isai. xxxvii. 14. hung it up*, it may be, before the Lord. What Hezekiah did with a paper of threatening, other princes might do with these psalms of encouragement and hope. Some have imagined that they were called *golden psalms* merely on account of their distinguished excellence. That distinguished excellence, however, doth not appear; and what is more, the ancient Jews, it is certain, had a different way of marking this out: as, *The song of songs, which is Solomon's; not the golden song of Solomon.* Ainsworth supposes the word *מכתם* *michtam* to signify a golden jewel. That the affixing such a title to a psalm would have been agreeable enough to the eastern taste anciently, we may believe, from

what appears in these modern times. D'Herbelot has actually mentioned a book intitled *bracelets of gold*, containing an account of all that history had mentioned relating to a month sacred among the Arabs. I cannot, however, easily admit that this is the true meaning of the word *michtam*, because there are several psalms which have this word prefixed to them; whereas, if it signified a *jewel of gold*, it would have been intended, if we may judge by modern titles of eastern books, to have distinguished one psalm from all the rest. To which may be added, that some of these psalms have another name given them; the 56th being called *the dove dumb in distant places*; and the present, *the lily of the testimony.* I will only farther add, that this writing in *letters of gold* still continues in the east. Maillet, speaking of the royal Mohammedan library in Egypt, which was so famous, and was afterwards destroyed by Saladin, says, "The greatest part of these books were written in letters of gold, such as the Turks and Arabs, even of our time, made use of in the titles of their books." And a little after, speaking of the ignorance of the modern Egyptians, as to the burnishing of gold, so that their gilding has nothing of the ancient splendour, he adds, "It is true, to make up this defect, they have preserved the art of making gold liquid, and fit for ink. I have seen some of their books written with this gold, which were extremely beautiful." See *Observations*, p. 318.

When he strove with Aram-naharain] That is Syria of the rivers, or that part of it which is called *Mesopotamia*, as lying between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates. The Syrians, both here and in other places, were called *Aram*, because they were the descendants of Aram, the son of Shem, *Gen. x. 22.* *Aram-Zobah* is that part of Syria which was called *Zobah.* 2 Sam. viii. 5. As David's victory over Idumea was different from that over the Syrians, the next clause should be rendered literally, *And Joab returned.* This conquest of Joab's is to be looked upon as distinct from that of Abishai, mentioned 2 Sam. viii. 13. and 1 Chron. xviii. 12. After Abishai had slain eighteen thousand of the Idumeans, Joab fell upon them again; and, as the title of this psalm particularly informs us, smote in the same place twelve thousand more, and afterwards destroyed them entirely. See 1 Kings, xi. 15, 16. *The Valley of Salt*, is in Idumæa, near the Black Sea.

Ver. 1. *Thou hast scattered us*] See 1 Sam. xxxi. 1. 7. Mudge renders these words, *Thou hast made a breach upon us.*

Ver. 2. *Thou hast made the earth to tremble*] *The land.* By this figurative expression the Scripture frequently denotes

5 That thy beloved 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 mete out the valley of Succoth.

7 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head;

Judah is my lawgiver;

8 Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

9 Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

10 Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst

extraordinary troubles and calamities: Compare Isai. xxiii. 13. xxix. 6. And such were the dreadful commotions and miserable divisions among David's people.

Ver. 3. *The wine of astonishment*] i. e. "Thou hast so dispirited us, as if thou hadst given us a myrrhate draught." So Dr. Hammond interprets the wine of astonishment. See on Pf. xi. 6. and Zech. xii. 2. Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that though it is contrary to the title of the present psalm, yet it was composed upon occasion of David's being crowned by all Israel at Hebron, and there sung, and with those variations which we find at the 108th psalm, after the taking of Jerusalem. This I am sure of, and this only I will venture to pronounce, that this golden memorial of David suits this occasion, and no other that I know of. It was written when the Israelites were dispersed, and driven out of their dwellings by their enemies. *Thou hast scattered us*, ver. 1.—When they were in terror, and divided amongst themselves: *Thou hast made the earth to tremble, and divided it.*—This was exactly the condition in which Israel was, from the death of Saul. The Israelite cities contiguous to the Philistines were deserted by their inhabitants after the battle of Gilboa; and soon after, the kingdom was divided under David and Ishbosheth. David now beseeches God to heal the divisions of his people: *Heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh*: and that was done when they all joined to make David their king at Hebron. God had now given them a centre of union, to which they might resort, as the forces of a broken army to their standard. *Thou hast given a banner*, &c. ver. 4. David was the only centre of union that people ever had; and God now made him their captain and ruler, to manifest the truth of those promises long since made to him. David here sings in the rapture of a man who had just recovered his right, *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine.*—Gilead and Manasseh were just before in the possession of Ishbosheth: no king of Israel but David was ever dispossessed of them and recovered them again. *Life of David*, book ii. chap. 5.

Ver. 4. *Thou hast given a banner to them that feared thee*] That is, "Though the Philistines and other nations have long been too hard for us, by reason of our divisions; yet now thou hast made me to be king, that under my banner, or ensign, the people may unanimously fight against their enemies." *Because of the truth*, signifies, "According to thy faithful promise given me, to be king over them." Mudge renders this and the following verses thus, *Thou givest to them that fear thee a signal to be displayed before the truth.* Ver. 5. *That thy favoured ones may be delivered, clothe thy right arm with victory, and answer us.* Ver. 6. *God speaketh in his sanctuary. I will exult: I shall portion out Shechem, and measure the valley of Succoth.* The fourth verse, he says, seems to mean that God had ap-

pointed for the consolation of his people a certain signal of favour, with which therefore he prays him to answer them. This accordingly he does. *God speaketh in his sanctuary*, called דְבִיר *debir*, or *oracle*, for that very reason. What he desires then, as he stands imploring the mercy of God before the oracle, is, that he may see the usual signal of favour proceed from it: a voice perhaps, joined with some luminous emanation; whence the phrase of *the light of God's countenance*. The expression in the 6th verse seems to be proverbial, and means, "I shall divide the spoils of my enemies with as much ease as the sons of Jacob portioned out Shechem, and measured out for their tents the valley of Succoth." The satisfaction that Benhadad received touching the safety of his life, 1 Kings, xx. 31, 32. appears to have been by words; but it seems that the modern eastern people have looked upon the giving them a banner, as a more sure pledge of protection. Thus Albert Aquensis informs us, that when Jerusalem was taken in 1099, about three hundred Saracens got upon the roof of a very lofty building, and earnestly begged for quarter; but could not be induced by any promises of safety to come down, till they had received the banner of Tancred, one of the chiefs of the Croisade army, as a pledge of life. It did not indeed avail them, as that historian observes, for their behaviour occasioned such indignation that they were, to a man, destroyed. The event shewed the faithlessness of these zealots, whom no solemnities could bind; but the Saracens surrendering themselves upon the delivery of a standard to them, proves in how strong a light they looked upon the giving a banner, since it induced them to trust it when they would not trust any promises. Perhaps the delivery of a banner was anciently esteemed in like manner an obligation to protect, and that the Psalmist might here consider it in this light; when, upon a victory gained over the Syrians and Edomites, after the public affairs of Israel had been in a very low estate, he says, *Thou hast shewed thy people hard things*, &c.—*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee.* "Though thou didst for a time give up thine Israel into the hands of their enemies, thou hast now given them an assurance of thy having received them under thy protection." When the Psalmist is represented as saying, *Thou hast given a banner,—that it may be displayed*, it may be questioned whether it is rightly translated, since it is most probable that they used anciently only a spear, properly ornamented, to distinguish it from a common one; as the same Albert tells us, that a very long spear covered all over with silver, (to which another writer of those Croisade wars adds, a ball of gold at the top,) was the standard of the Egyptian princes at that time, and carried before their armies. *Thou hast given a banner,—an ensign or standard, to them that fear thee,* that

cast us off? and *thou, O God, which* didst not go out with our armies?

11 Give us help from trouble: for vain is

the help of man.

12 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

that it may be lifted up, may perhaps be a better version; or rather, that they may lift up a banner to themselves, or encourage themselves with the confident persuasion that they are under the protection of God; because of the truth, thy word of promise, which is an assurance of protection, like the giving me and my people a banner; the surest of pledges. See the Observations, p. 360.

Ver. 7, 8. *Gilead is mine, &c.*] He exultingly surveys his strength. Gilead and Manasseh comprehended the whole country beyond Jordan, as did Ephraim and Judah on this side; of which Ephraim, containing the main body of tribes, is here said to be the strength of his head; i. e. the guard of his person: [Achish told David that he would make him the keeper of his head.] The main bulk of the strength lay in Ephraim. Judah was his minister, or secretary of state, as that was the reigning tribe. *Moab is my wash-pot*, signifies, "the Moabites shall be subject to me." The wash-pot here is a mean piece of household-stuff for the use of the feet, (as the Syriac interprets it) the lowest part of the body, and so it is a fit title for the Moabites; as we may gather from 2 Sam. viii. 2. where it is said, *He smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; and with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive: and the Moabites became David's servants, and brought him gifts.* The next phrase, *Over Edom will I cast out my shoe*, signifies, "I will trample upon the Edomites, and make them my slaves." (Compare 2 Sam. viii. 14.) Or, *I will reach out my shoe to them*, as a master does to his meanest servants, to be untied and taken off by him, Matth. iii. 11. *Philistia triumph thou because of me*, may signify, "Let the Philistines also add to my triumph, by meeting me as their conquering lord." Houbigant renders it, *Against the Philistines I will be united.* See Ps. cviii. 9. Mudge is of opinion, that, as Ephraim and Judah are mentioned as affording a supply of certain things to David; so we are to understand the same of Moab, Edom, and Philistia; the two former fulfilling the meaner offices, while Philistia is spoken of as his supporter: *Philistia, be thou my sidesman or supporter.* But the common interpretation appears to be the best; and the verses, disrobed of metaphor, may be thus understood: "Gilead and Manasseh have submitted to me; Ephraim furnishes me with valiant men; and Judah with men of prudence and wisdom. I will reduce the Moabites to servitude: I will triumph over the Edomites, and make them my slaves; and the Philistines shall add to my triumph." See the Essay for a new Translation.

Ver. 9. *Who will bring me, &c.*] Dr. Delaney observes, that David, having promised himself, in a prophetic rapture, the dominion over Moab and Edom, considered himself as that rod which should rise out of Israel, and smite the corners of Moab, and make Edom a possession, Numb. xxiv. 17. And what king but David subdued the haughty Philistines, conquered Moab first, and Edom after? And when could this prophecy be written, but in the beginning of his reign;

when the Philistines were triumphant, and before he had made any of these conquests? It appears from this verse, that David expected to be brought by God into a strong city, before he was brought into Edom by him. Jerusalem is the only city so characterised, which David took before his war with Edom. He concludes with imploring the divine aid; with a resolution, that, on this presumption, he and his people would act valiantly; and accordingly they marched directly against Jerusalem, and took it by storm. Some, from the title of this psalm, imagine the strong city here mentioned to be Rabbah of the Ammonites. See 2 Sam. xii. 26.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have here,

1. The deplorable state of the affairs of the Jewish nation during the ill administration of Saul, and the struggles of Ishbosheth. Probably, this description looked forward also, as prophetic of that state, when, for their rejection of God's anointed, his wrath should be kindled, more terrible convulsions destroy their whole polity and government, and, scattered into all lands, they should bear the marks of God's heavy hand; an astonishment to others; a terror to themselves.

2. In the midst of their distresses, a banner is displayed for the faithful Israelites, in David promised to be their king and captain, and now exalted to the throne; under whom enlisted, union within prepared them for victory without: animated by his presence, and bold under such a leader, they lifted up their hostile banners, desied and vanquished their foes. Christ, the captain of our salvation, may also be here designed; his banner of love spread abroad, invites poor sinners to his standard; under him enlisted, spiritual strength and courage animate their souls, and they go forth conquering and to conquer: and to him shall the dispersed of Israel be gathered at last, and, turning to the Lord, see a period of their miseries. Note; (1.) The deeper our distresses, the more are the power and grace of our God magnified in our deliverance. (2.) We should ever remember the state in which Jesus found us, and the misery from which he drew us, as an engagement to be faithful, and fight manfully under his banners.

3. He prays earnestly for God's help and healing. *O turn thyself to us again*, cease from thy displeasure, and visit us with thy salvation; *heal the breaches*, for thou alone canst heal them; and as the danger is imminent, *it shaketh*, let thy mercy to the land be speedy, that thy beloved may be delivered from the hands of all their enemies; for, having no power of themselves, they look to thee; *save with thy right hand, and hear me*,—their advocate. Note; (1.) Sin has made a deadly breach in our souls, which nothing but the grace of God can repair. (2.) They who turn to God in prayer, may expect his return to them in mercy. (3.) They who fear God are beloved by him, and his right hand will save them.

2dly, David appears triumphing in the divine promises; God hath sworn; he believes, and in consequence rejoices.

P S A L. LXI.

David fleeth to God upon his former experience: he voweth perpetual service unto him, because of his promises.

To the chief musician upon Neginah, *A Psalm of David.*

HEAR my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I.

3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

1. All foes within and without shall yield to him. Israel, in their several tribes who had joined Ishbosheth, shall return to him. Conquest without would follow union within. *Note;* (1.) When a believer can say, Christ is mine, then all other blessings necessarily follow. (2.) When God pleases, he can make our bitterest foes our warmest friends. (3.) National union is a great blessing from God.

2. He answers a difficulty which might be suggested from the strength of the enemy's fortresses. *Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?* God is the strength of his confidence. *Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off?* yes, assuredly: now thou art returned in mercy, we shall be victorious; and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies before, shalt make us now more than conquerors. *Therefore give us help from trouble,* in answer to our fervent prayers; for vain is the help of man, we acknowledge it; and, renouncing every human confidence, desire alone to repose ourselves on thee. And thus we are confident, that *through God we shall do valiantly,* and put all our enemies under our feet, for he it is who shall tread down our enemies, on whom we depend, and to whom we will ascribe the praise of all our success. *Note;* (1.) Difficulties will often stand in the believer's way, but faith will overcome them all. (2.) When to sense we seem as cast off, we must not quit our hold of the promise, but trust, and wait to see the salvation of God. (3.) When our dangers are greatest, our prayers and cries should be most earnest. (4.) The less we expect to receive from the creature, the surer we are to avoid disappointment. (5.) If we are enabled to do valiantly against our spiritual enemies, let us remember from whom cometh our strength, and lay at his feet the crown which his own grace has obtained for us.

P S A L. LXI.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ עַל נְגִינָה *lamnatseach al neginath.*] The occasion of this psalm is very doubtful. Mudge thinks that it was composed upon the same occasion with the former. In which view the two first verses, says he, are a prayer to God, that he would conduct him safe in his attempt upon the city, which was otherwise too strong for him; probably, seated on an almost impregnable rock. In the three next he acknowledges the divine protection in bringing him back safe into his country.

4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given *me* the heritage of those that fear thy name.

6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations.

7 He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.

8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

The sixth and seventh are spoken by the priests, or a chorus of priests, praying for long life to the king. In the last, the king concludes with saying, that he would every day thus pay his vows, by visiting God's temple and praising his name.

Ver. 2. From the end of the earth] *From the extremity of the land will I cry unto thee, now, when my heart is sinking. Conduct me up to the rock which is too high for me.* He calls Edom the extremity of the country, from whence he would direct his prayer to God, now his heart began to sink with reflecting on the danger of his enterprize. Mudge. Those who conceive the psalm to have been written during the time of David's flight from Absalom, suppose that the end of the land refers to Mahanaim, which lies beyond Jordan, in the remoter parts of Judea. See 2 Sam. xvii. 22.

Ver. 4, 5. I will abide in thy tabernacle, &c.] David's danger seems to have been over before he had finished this psalm; and therefore, after a pause, he here begins to acknowledge how God had granted the petitions that he had made while he was in distress, and thankfully commemorates his mercy, in crowning his attempt, and giving him the heritage of those that fear his name; i.e. the possession of the country, which is the inheritance of his faithful people.

Ver. 6. Thou wilt prolong the king's life] *Thou wilt add days to the king's days; and to his years generation upon generation.* The Chaldee paraphrase adds the word *Christ*. Thus, *Thou shalt give unto Christ, the king, days upon days. His years shall be as the generations of this world, and the generations of the world to come.* And so Theodoret observes, that the former part of the verse may agree very well with the Psalmist; but that the latter part of it is by no means applicable to him, but to Christ; who was, according to the flesh, to descend from him, and of whom the Psalmist was an eminent type.

Ver. 8. So will I sing praise, &c.] *Thus will I found thy name for ever, when I pay my vows every day.*

REFLECTIONS.—In this psalm,

1. David looks up to God in his troubles; *Hear my cry, O God, attend unto my prayer. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I,* to a place of present safety, but especially to the rock of ages, the promised Messiah, the hope of his afflicted people. *Note;* (1.) Wherever we are, a throne of grace is open; and the more we are removed from other means, the more diligent ought we to be in secret prayer.

(2.) There

P S A L. LXII.

David, professing his confidence in God, discourageth his enemies. In the same confidence he encourageth the godly. No trust is to be put in worldly things. Power and mercy belong to God.

To the chief musician, to Jeduthun; A Psalm of David.

TRULY my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.

2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.

4 They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

6 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be moved.

7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God.

8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

9 Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.

10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.

12 Also unto thee, O LORD, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

(2.) There is, blessed be God, a rock higher than we, on which if placed, we need not fear what earth or hell can do against us. (3.) Every day we need cry to God, to fix us more securely on this sure foundation, Jesus Christ.

2. From past experience he is encouraged to expect present help. *Thou hast been a shelter, or a covert for me, and a strong tower from the enemy; therefore, in humble hope of the same needful protection, I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; now taking refuge under thy protection, hoping shortly to return to thy tabernacle in Sion, and by and by to go to that heavenly hill, where God's glory is ever visible to his saints; and I will trust in the covert of thy wings, confident of safety there, when every prospect around me is most dark and threatening.* Note; (1.) We should often remember what God has done for us, as an argument to encourage our hearts to hope for greater mercies. (2.) They are safe, whom God's almighty power keeps under his wing. (3.) If we abide faithful and constant in his worship and service below, we may comfortably look forward to an eternal mansion in his better tabernacle above.

P S A L. LXII.

Title. *למנצח על ידותון lammatschah al ieduthun.* It is not said upon what occasion this psalm was written. Bishop Patrick apprehends that David composed it when he had overcome all the fears into which the rebellion of Absalom at first threw him, though he was not yet fully restored to his kingdom. It is evidently a psalm of praise for some deliverance which the author attributes wholly to God, on whom alone therefore he advises all people to place their dependance.

Ver. 1. *Truly my soul waiteth]* Even to God is my soul silent; see ver. 5.

Ver. 3. *How long will ye imagine mischief? &c.]* How

long will ye push against a single man? Ye shall all of you be slain, and fall on a sudden, like a bending wall, or a tottering fence. See Green and Mudge. The word *fence*, or *hedge*, does not come up to the original; which means such a sort of partition, or wall, as, when it is decayed, is liable to fall and crush a man to death. In this view the similitude is, not that they should be in a ruinous condition, like a decayed wall, but that they should threaten destruction to all who came near them, as a falling wall does to all those who come within the reach of it; and, as the prophet expresses it, *like a breach ready to fall, swelling out into a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant.* Isai. xxx. 13.

Ver. 9. *A lie]* That is, *deceitful*; because unable to perform what they seem by their outward appearance to promise: or a *lie* may signify a *mere nothing*; for a lie has no reality.

Ver. 10—12. *Trust not in oppression, &c.]* Trust not in oppression and rapine; become not vain: *If riches, &c.* ver. 11. *One thing God hath pronounced; there are two which I have heard; ver. 12. that power belongeth unto God, and that to thee, Lord, belongeth favour; for thou wilt render to every man according to his work.* These three verses are directed to oppressors, probably those from whom he had been in danger; not to be too eager after ill-gotten power or riches, nor to trust too much upon them; since there are two things confessedly against them, the power and the goodness of God, by which he was able and willing to do justice to all mankind, to protect his friends, and defeat their enemies. The phrase, *God hath spoken, &c.* is only used to shew the certainty of the thing. Archbishop Tillotson compares it to those of the Latins, *Semel atque iterum—fideliter ter et amplius, &c.* And, indeed, it is common with writers of all languages, to use a certain number for an uncertain one. See his Sermon on this text.

REFLEC-

P S A L. LXIII.

David's thirst for God: his manner of blessing God: his confidence of his enemies' destruction, and his own safety.

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

O GOD, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee,

my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

3 Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, David here,

1. Professes his confidence in God for protection and safety: as he made him alone his rock and defence, he waited, or was silent; without impatience or distrust expected to see the salvation of God. Numerous and mischievous as his foes were, he knew that he should not be greatly moved; tempted he might be in difficulties and dangers, but still safe under the defence of the Almighty. *Note;* Patient and submissive resignation of our souls to God, is the certain way to a happy issue out of all our afflictions.

2. He foresees the ruin of his enemies, whose character he describes. They were mischievous; plotted how to deprive him of his crown and dignity, delighted to propagate lies to injure him; and with perfidious treachery, while they professed outward kindness, their hearts within rankled with malice. But vain were their designs to thrust him down whom God had promised to exalt. *Note;* (1.) A lying tongue will be the curse of its owner. (2.) Traitors will find an avenging God. (3.) They who trust in God, may defy all their enemies to hurt them.

3. He encourages his soul to wait only upon God, and strengthens his faith in him by a variety of epithets. *My rock, who can move me? my salvation, who can destroy me? my defence, who can hurt me? my glory, in whom I will make my boast; my strength, to make me more than conqueror; my refuge, under whose wings I shall be safe.* *Note;* (1.) They are truly blessed and happy who can say, This God is my God. (2.) The expectation of the faithful cometh only from God, he is to them all and in all. (3.) The believer's rejoicing is never in himself, but in his exalted Head; he will ever say, My God is my glory.

2dly, His own experience of the blessedness of dependance upon God, urges him to invite all to come and taste the same felicity. *Trust in him at all times; ye people, ye people of Israel, and all the Israel of God, wherever dispersed, or however distressed, at all times make God your trust, to guide, protect, preserve, and strengthen you; pour out your heart before him, in earnest and importunate prayer, and tell him of all your troubles with freedom: for God is a refuge for us; for me, and for you, and all who fly to him as their rock and hope alone, renouncing every other ground of confidence, which would be utterly insufficient to support their souls.* He cautions them therefore,

1. Not to trust in men, neither of high nor low degree, whose multitude, or greatness, or wisdom, can afford us no safety; they are deceitful helps, and in the day of trial will prove lighter than vanity. *Note;* The more we cease from man, and entirely cleave to God, the more secure shall we be from disappointment.

2. Not to trust in riches, however obtained, whether by oppression or extortion, by open violence or robbery; or by the most lawful means, honest labour or inheritance. *Note;* Gain is often a great foe to godliness, and gold too often made the rival of God in the heart: a state of prosperity is exceedingly dangerous, and they who are in it, have as much need to pray in all time of their wealth as of their tribulation, *Good Lord, deliver us!*

3. He exhorts them to trust in God as their never-failing refuge; and this because of his faithfulness, power, mercy, and justice. He hath spoken once, yea, twice, confirming the souls of his faithful people. His omnipotence none dare encounter; his mercy is infinite, and we may therefore always hope in it; and his justice impartial, therefore shall the enemies of his name and people be destroyed, and those who were oppressed with wrong be vindicated. Good reason then there is, that at all times he should be alone exalted as our only hope and help. *Note;* The more we consider God's perfections and promises, as manifested to us in a covenant of grace, the more cause we shall see to depend on him as our Almighty strength, to trust him as infinite in goodness, and abundant in mercy, and to expect from him present protection and eternal glory.

P S A L. LXIII.

Title. מזמור לדוד *mizmor ledavid*] The beginning of this psalm evidently shews, that David was, when he wrote it, in a wilderness or desert country, (1 Sam. xxii. 5. probably the forest of Hareth, or Ziph, belonging to Judah,) absent from the sanctuary: for he therein expresses the impatience of his desires to be restored to the solemnity of divine worship, and resolves, that, when God grants him that satisfaction, he will continually employ himself in celebrating his loving-kindness; ver. 3, 4. This, he tells us, would be to him a more grateful entertainment than the richest feast, ver. 5.—should employ his waking hours in the watches of the night, ver. 6. and confirm his pleasing trust and confidence in the divine protection, ver. 7.—And from his adherence to God, and past experience of his favour, he assures himself of the disappointment and destruction of his enemies; but that himself, and all who feared God, should rejoice in his salvation, ver. 8—11. Chandler.

Ver. 1. Early will I seek thee] *To seek God*, is to address him by supplication and thanksgiving: and as our safety by night should be acknowledged by the sacrifice of praise, so should our protection through the day be humbly sought after by serious prayer every morning. *My soul thirsteth for thee*, continues the Psalmist; i. e. eagerly desires to approach thee: *Thirsting*, in all languages, is frequently used for earnestly longing after, or passionately wishing for any thing.

5 My soul shall be satisfied as *with* marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

6 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the *night* watches.

7 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

8 My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

9 But those *that* seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

10 They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

thing. He goes on, *my flesh longeth for thee*. The verb *קָמַם* *kamab*, rendered *longeth*, is used only in this place; and therefore the signification of it is rather uncertain, but will light from the Arabic dialect. In Golius's Lexicon it receive signifies, *His eye grew dim—his colour was changed, and his mind weakened*; and, therefore, as used by the Psalmist, implies the utmost intenseness and fervency of desire; as though it impaired his sight, and altered the very hue of his body; effects oftentimes of eager and unsatisfied desires. Houbigant and some other critics are for altering the Hebrew in the next clause, and reading, not *in a dry land*, but *as a dry land*; which is figuratively said to *thirst* for water, when it wants rain. But David describes his own eager desire to approach God's sanctuary, by the figurative expression of thirsting himself, and not by barren land's thirsting for or desiring water; and the reading of the text is genuine, as he represents his present situation, which was in a dry and thirsty wilderness. The whole clause, however, should be thus rendered, *My flesh pines away for thee in a dry land, and where I am faint without water*. He experienced the vehemency of thirst in a wilderness, where he could get no supply of water, and by that sensation expresses the vehemence and impatience of his own mind to be restored to the worship of God.

Ver. 2. To see thy power, &c.] The meaning, says Jarchi, here is, "I have thirsted to see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the holy tabernacle in Shilo; where my soul was satisfied with the vision of thy power and glory." The Psalmist refers here to the cloud and glory, which he had seen in the tabernacle and above the ark, and which were the peculiar emblems of the divine majesty.

Ver. 4. I will lift up my hands in thy name] i. e. "I will, in the most solemn manner, pay my adorations to thee, and render thee most grateful acknowledgments for thy benefits, as the only living and true God."

Ver. 8. My soul followeth hard after thee] *My soul hath kept close,—hath adhered to thee*. The Psalmist means that his soul adhered to God with the warmest affection, and longed to offer up his sacrifices of praise in his sanctuary.

Ver. 9. But those that seek my soul, &c.] Our version connects both parts of the verse. I rather think there are two distinct parts in it, as there are in all the other verses; and that the rendering should be, *They shall be for destruction, who seek my life: they shall go into the lowest parts of the earth*; i. e. That they themselves should be destroyed and brought down to the grave, who sought his destruction. Chandler.

Ver. 10. They shall fall, &c.] *Their blood shall gush out by the edge of the sword*. The verb properly signifies the boiling of water in a pot; when, through the violence of the heat, it is thrown out of it: and, from hence, it figuratively denotes the bursting or boiling out of the blood from the wound of a sword, or any other deadly instrument. Virgil, in a very lively manner, has expressed it by another almost similar word:

Tum caput ipsi aufert domino, truncumque relinquit
Sanguine singultantem. Æn. ix. ver. 332.

The gasping head flies off; a purple flood
Flows from the trunk that welters in the blood.

DRYDEN.

One almost sees the blood *sobbing*, as it were, and gushing out from the headless body. The expression, as used by the Psalmist, denotes that they should die a violent death, and their blood should be spilled by the edge of the sword; and the next expression, *They shall be a portion for foxes*, signifies, "They shall be left unburied, and as a prey to ravenous beasts." Bochart has shewn that foxes preyed upon dead bodies. See his Hieroz. pars i. cap. 13. and Chandler.

Ver. 11. But the king shall rejoice] David was king by designation, and anointed when he was in the wilderness of Judah; but had not then taken the title, and was not advanced to the throne. Hence M. Le Clerc and others think that this psalm could not be written by him when he sojourned in the wilderness. But I apprehend that this objection is but of little force; for all that he affirms is, that when his enemies shall be destroyed, then *the king shall rejoice in God*; speaking of himself undoubtedly, though not of what he now was, but should then be when God had delivered him from those who sought his life. *Every one that swears by him shall glory*; i. e. who invokes his name, worships him, and makes him the object of religious reverence and fear; all which is implied in swearing, as an oath is an immediate appeal and solemn act of worship to God. Mudge renders the latter part of the verse thus: *Every one that sweareth by him shall glory; whereas the mouth of them who pronounce a lie shall be stopped*: for he observes judiciously, that the two clauses of the verse seem to be opposed to each other: they that *swore by the God of Israel*, to those who *pronounced a lie, or named the false gods*. The former should find occasion for glorifying, whereas the mouth of the other should be stopped.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Wherever David was, he found his heart in tune for praise; a wilderness shall echo with his songs,

P S A L. LXIV.

David prayeth for deliverance, complaining of his enemies: he promiseth himself to see such an evident destruction of them, that the righteous shall rejoice at it.

To the chief musician, A Psalm of David.

HEAR my voice, O God, in my prayer; preserve my life from fear of the enemy.

2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:

3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

6 They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward

songs, since thither divine Providence hath led him: the children of God should learn of him, even though sorrowful, to be always rejoicing, and, when most desolate and solitary, to make melody still in their hearts unto God.

1. The ground of all his comfort was this, *O God, thou art my God*: a sense of an interest in his love and favour, can make a prison a palace, a wilderness a paradise.

2. He resolves to cleave to God, and longs for his return to the sanctuary, from which at present he suffered an irksome banishment. *Early will I seek thee*; here, though destitute of public ordinances, in private prayer and secret meditation he would exercise himself, beginning with the dawn of day; *my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee*, with eager and importunate desire, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: no waters of the sanctuary to refresh and comfort his soul; therefore he pants for the courts of God's tabernacle, *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary*; to enjoy some sweet manifestations of divine favour where he was, as he had formerly been favoured with when engaged in the worship of the sanctuary, and thither he wishes to return. *Note*: (1.) This world is a barren land, nothing in it can satisfy the longings of the soul. God alone is the believer's all-sufficient portion. (2.) The more we are convinced of the emptiness of the creature, the more we should fly to the fulness of God. (3.) They who know the blessings of public ordinances, will feelingly regret the want of them. (4.) Wherever we are, a throne of grace is open; and, if we diligently seek the Lord, we may find the same comfortable presence of God under a tree or in a mountain, as in the midst of the congregation.

2dly, His desires are answered, and prayers soon exchanged for joyful praises.

1. *Because thy loving-kindness is better than life: my lips shall praise thee*; though life is a blessing, yet without God's love, in the midst of life we are in death; we may then only be truly said to live, when, quickened by his Spirit, our souls live by him and for him: in this case even death becomes our privilege, and removal from earth is our translation to the life of eternity.

2. He is determined to continue his praise as long as his being: thus, as he had begun, he purposes to persevere, and lift up his hands incessantly below in thanksgiving, till he should join above the everlasting songs of saints and angels. *Note*: They who expect to spend eternity in God's praise, will begin the pleasing service here, and

learn in every state, condition, and circumstance, to give thanks.

3. He promises himself great delight in his service; this work of praise shall be his present reward. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness*; the most delicious viands to the taste would not be so grateful, as to his soul this happy communion with God, while his mouth praised him with joyful lips. *Note*: There is a complacency and inward satisfaction to be enjoyed in God's love and service, compared with which the highest gratifications of sense are poor and insipid.

4. By night as well as day, on this pleasing subject his thoughts continually dwelt. *When I remember thee upon my bed*; lying down to rest, and waking up in the morning, God was last and first in his thoughts; and meditate on thee in the night-watches; when his eyes were kept waking that he could not sleep, he employed the hours of darkness in contemplation, which more than recompensed the lost repose.

3dly, Resolved to praise, he wanted not abundant matter for his song.

His experience of past support, and confidence of present help, afforded cause of rejoicing. *Thou hast been my help*, and art willing to save me to the uttermost, therefore under the shadow of thy wings, where, as the chickens shelter themselves from danger, and are refreshed with the vital warmth, my soul is comfortably lodged, *will I rejoice*. *My soul followeth hard after thee*, in prayer, meditation, and every means of grace within his power: *thy right hand upholdeth me*, by which alone I am supported and strengthened, to run and not be weary, and to walk and not be faint. *Note*: (1.) They who would cleave to God faithfully, are called upon to follow hard after him in the means of grace and the path of duty. (2.) Our strength for the one or other is not in ourselves but from him, without which our feet would quickly stumble, our hearts grow dead, and our lips be sealed up in silence, and forget to pray or praise.

P S A L. LXIV.

Title. לְמִנְצָה מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד *lammatsfach mizmor le-david.*] This psalm was probably written by David when he was fallen into disgrace with Saul, and driven from his court, perhaps, through the calumnies and falsehoods which Saul's courtiers vented against him, in order to ingratiate themselves with the king. He complains in it greatly of the treachery of his enemies, which he describes

thought of every one of them, and the heart is deep.

7 But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.

8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.

9 And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

scribes in strong metaphors to the 6th verse, after which follows the assurance of their downfall, and the exaltation of the righteous.

Ver. 1. *From fear of the enemy*] The fear seems to be something contrived to destroy, by way of terrifying. See *Iai. xxiv.* where it is mentioned with the *pit* and the *snare*, as an engine of destruction.

Ver. 3. *Bend their bows, &c.*] *Direct their arrows, &c.*

Ver. 4. *At the perfect*] *The upright man.* Houbigant and Mudge David gives himself this high appellation, as referring to his integrity and uprightness; his perfect innocence of the crimes which his calumniators urged against him.

Ver. 6. *They search out iniquities, &c.*] *They disguise their iniquities, and hide them with deep dissimulation: the inside and heart of every one of them is deep.* See Mudge and Schultens.

Ver. 8. *So they shall make their own tongue, &c.*] *And their own tongue shall cause it to fall upon them: all that see, &c.*

Ver. 9. *For they shall wisely consider of*] *For they shall understand, &c.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have here, 1. David, in fear, crying to God for protection and safety. 2. He opens before God the wickedness of his enemies. *Note;* (1.) The people of God have been in every age the butt of the malignant tongue; and bitter words of reproach and infamy have been liberally shot forth against them. (2.) Daring sinners harden each other; and, having cast off God's government, would fain flatter themselves they can elude his omniscience, and promise themselves impunity in their iniquities. (3.) They who are maliciously bent on mischief, stop at no pains to accomplish their designs: how few christians serve their Lord so assiduously, heart and hand, as the devil's servants do their master!

2dly, Though the wicked say, God shall not see, he will awfully convince them of their folly.

1. By his judgments. *God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded:* one of his arrows shall do more terrible execution than all theirs; it shall pierce their hearts, and lay them dead at his feet, in the midst of their false and fatal security. *Note;* (1.) When God strikes,

David praifeth God for his grace. The blessedness of God's chosen, by reason of benefits.

To the chief musician. A Psalm and Song of David.

PRAISE waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

2 O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

3 Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.

4 Blessed is the man whom thou choofest, and

he strikes home, and there is no escape. (2.) The horrid imprecations of the passionate and profane, bring upon their own souls that damnation which they so impiously and rashly denounce on others.

2. The effects of these judgments would be great; fear of their plagues shall make beholders flee to save themselves from perishing among them. All that see it, struck with conviction, shall consider, and own God's righteous vengeance, and declare it as an admonition to the rising generation. The righteous shall be glad at beholding God glorified, and shall rejoice in his salvation, thus manifested for them; and, by present experience of his gracious interposition, be encouraged to trust him in all future dangers. *Note;* (1.) It is wisdom to profit by the sufferings or punishments of others. (2.) Many a warning is lost by inconsiderateness. (3.) The persecutors of God's people should read and learn, and tremble, while the door of hope is yet open. (4.) Though the misery of an enemy, simply considered, cannot be a good man's delight; yet to be rescued from the oppressor, and to see God's righteous judgments executed, is just matter of joy. (5.) They who make God their trust, shall find him their glory.

Title. למננה כבוד לרור שיר *lamnatsech mizmor le-david shiir.*] This psalm is attributed to David, and, by the contents of it, appears to have been made after some great drought; and therefore some suppose it to relate to the famine mentioned 2 Sam. xxi. Dr. Delaney says, it is on all hands agreed to have been composed upon the ceasing of that calamity. See on ver. 9. It is further said, by some, to have a spiritual sense; significative of the preaching of the apostles, who converted the heathen by the promulgation of the Gospel.

Ver. 1. *Praise waiteth for thee*] Or, as the words may be rendered, *Silence to thee is praise.* This, according to Mr. Martin, refers to the religious silence of the whole congregation in the tabernacle, while the priest offered incense in the sanctuary. Thus St. Luke tells us, that the whole multitude of the people were *praying without*, or offering up their silent devotions in that part of the temple which was appointed for them, while Zacharias was within the sanctuary at the time of incense. Luke, i. 10.

Ver. 3. *Iniquities prevail, &c.*] *Our iniquities prevail against us; but thou art he who blottest out our transgressions.*

causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

5 By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:

6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power:

7 Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.

8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.

10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blestest the springing thereof.

11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.

12 They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.

13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; the vallies also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

This was an encouragement for all men to address their prayers to God, who was so ready to hear them. Green and Mudge.

Ver. 4. *The man whom thou chooseth*] He felicitates the happy lot of the priests who had near and constant access to God; and he adds, *We shall be satisfied*, &c. i. e. "Though we cannot all enjoy that privilege; yet we are all permitted to taste and partake of the sacrifices of thanksgiving, which are offered to thee in thy house for the benefits that we have received from thee." See Pf. xxxvi. 8.

Ver. 5. *By terrible things, &c.*] *Wonderful things in righteousness wilt thou answer us*, &c. By these are meant the works of God's providence, mentioned in the following verses; which, however they may be disregarded by us, through our familiarity with them, are most stupendous, amazing, and awful; such as will always engage the inquiry, and excite the wonder, of the profoundest philosophers, but will for ever surpass their comprehension.

Ver. 8. *They also that dwell, &c.*] That is, "The remotest and most barbarous people are struck with the dread of thee, when thou alarmest them by any unusual tokens of thy power;" such as extraordinary thunders, lightnings, and storms.

Ver. 9—13. *Thou visitest the earth, &c.*] A complete comment upon this sacred hymn, says Dr. Delaney, is not the work either of my province or genius; and therefore I shall only observe, that the last five verses of it are the most rapturous, truly poetic, and natural image of joy, that imagination can form or comprehend. The reader of taste will see this in the simplest translation, ver. 9, &c. *Thou hast visited the earth; thou madest it to covet, and hast enriched it. The river of God is full of water. Thou shalt provide them corn, because thou hast prepared for it. Saturate [in the Hebrew make drunk] the furrows thereof; make them sink with showers: melt it—bless its springing buds—Thou hast crowned the year with thy goodness, and thy orbs shall drop down fatness; the pastures of the wilderness shall*

drop: the hills shall exult, and be girded with gladness—The fields have clothed themselves with cattle; the vallies have covered themselves with corn. They shall shout; yea, they shall sing. The reader will easily observe, that when the divine poet had seen the showers falling from heaven, and the Jordan overflowing his banks, all the consequent blessings were that moment present to his quick poetic sight, and he paints them accordingly. I would just remark, that *the river of God* is supposed by many commentators to mean the clouds, which, like a vast river, are never exhausted. Mudge renders the 11th verse, *Thou encirclest the years with thy richness, and the tracks of thy wheels drop fatness.* God is considered, says he, as in his chariot, driving round the earth; and from that chariot, i. e. the clouds, every where distilling fatness, fertility, and increase. *Thy paths* is rendered very properly in the liturgy version, *Thy clouds.* Nothing can be more elegant and poetical, than the personifying of the hills, the pastures, and vallies, in the 12th and 13th verses. But undoubtedly these words may be delightfully spiritualized by the devout soul.

REFLECTIONS.—The Psalmist here, as the mouth of the congregation, addresses his prayer to God.

1. He ascribes glory to him. *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion*; thy people there, expecting thy mercies, are ready to meet them with songs of thanksgiving: or, *to thee belong silence and praise*; silent expectation under every difficulty and trial, and entire acquiescence in thy holy will; and praise, the tribute due for deliverance: *unto thee shall the vow be performed*, which was made in their distress, and, on the gracious answer given to their prayer, should be with delight rendered to God. *Note*; Patient expectation shall be succeeded by joyful praise.

2. He adores him as the prayer-hearing God. *O thou that hearest prayer*, ever ready to answer, yea, more ready to hear than we to pray, *unto thee shall all flesh come*, engaged by the fame of thy grace, encouraged by the promises of thy word, and the experience of thy people.

3. He

P S A L. LXVI.

David exhorteth to praise God, to observe his great works, to bless him for his gracious benefits: he voweth for himself religious service to God: he declareth God's special goodness to himself.

To the chief musician, A Song or Psalm.

MAKE a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

2 Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

3 Say unto God, How terrible *art thou* in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.

4 All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.

5 Come and see the works of God: *he is* terrible in his doing toward the children of men.

6 He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.

7 He ruleth by his power for ever: his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

8 O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

9 Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

10 For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

11 Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidest affliction upon our loins.

12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

13 I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings: I will pay thee my vows,

3. He expresses his confidence in God's pardoning and sanctifying grace. *Iniquities prevail against me; the words of iniquity, the malicious aspersions of his enemies, or the indwelling corruptions of his own heart; but as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away, how great soever they have been; whether his own or those of God's faithful people, he knew the atoning blood would purge their consciences, and wipe away the guilt, the power, and the nature of all their sins.*

4. He declares the blessedness of the people of God, who were admitted into his courts, and favoured with a sense of his love. There the truest satisfaction was to be found; the goodness of his house, and the comforts of his worship, would abundantly refresh their souls. *Note; (1.) Communion with God is man's greatest happiness. (2.) They who would enjoy God's presence, must draw near to him in the ordinances of his worship, and be among the constant attendants at his temple. (3.) Though nothing on earth beside can satisfy an immortal soul, God is the sufficient portion of his people.*

5. He expects to see the destruction of all their enemies. *By terrible things in righteousness, wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; by just judgments inflicted on our foes, and merciful interpositions manifested in our behalf, wherein thy hand will be seen as the God of our salvation; and this will engage the trust of all thy people, wherever dispersed, or however distressed: who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea: the Israel of God, true believers, whether on sea, or land, or driven to the most distant corner, make him their confidence, and find him a sure refuge. Note; (1.) The enemies of God's people are regarded as rebels against himself, and will be made to tremble under his terrible arm. (2.) None who truly trusted in God,*

or cried to him in faith, could ever complain of disappointment.

P S A L. LXVI.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר lamnatseach shir mizmor.] This psalm has not David's name to it; nor is it known upon what occasion it was composed. Bishop Patrick's conjecture seems as probable as any other; namely, that it was written by David after God had advanced him to the throne, and peaceably settled him in his kingdom. But thus much only is certain, that it was composed upon some extraordinary national deliverance. See ver. 13. The Psalmist introduces it with the general Providence which God had exercised over his people; especially at their coming out of Egypt; for which he calls upon all the earth to celebrate his glory. The title of the LXX is, "A Psalm of the Resurrection."

Ver. 2. Make his praise glorious] Give him the glory of his praise; i. e. The glory which is due to his praise, and belongs to it. See Isai. xlii. 12. Mudge. Some render it, Give him glory by praising him.

Ver. 3. Thine enemies submit themselves unto thee] According to the original, יִכְרַשׁוּ לְךָ iekachashu leka, lie unto thee. See on Pl. xviii. 44.

Ver. 6. He turned the sea into dry land] This plainly refers to the passage through the Red Sea, and the rejoicing by Miriam, &c. upon the spot.

Ver. 7. Let not the rebellious exalt themselves] The rebellious or refractory; i. e. Pharaoh, whose stubbornness and pride occasioned his ruin. But the caution was still as necessary as ever. God's eyes were still looking up and down through the nations, to rescue his prisoners, how haughtily soever their persecutors might behave toward them. Mudge.

Ver. 9—12. Which holdeth our soul in life] These verses plainly refer to the deliverance from Egypt. After having

14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.

15 I will offer unto thee burnt-sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.

16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

17 I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me.

19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

made his people pass through several trials in Egypt, God, brought them into a net: "They are entangled, Pharaoh said, 'The wilderness hath shut them in.'" Exod. xiv. 3. He put that contracting pain into their loins, which arises from a strong fear. He brought the Egyptian chariots close home upon their backs; he carried them through the fire, (the pillar of fire,) and through the Red Sea; and at last brought them into the rich land, flowing with milk and honey. Mudge. For affliction, in ver. 11. we may read, distress, restraint; and instead of a wealthy place, in ver. 12. a watered place.

Ver. 15. Of fatlings; i. e. The fattest lambs. The incense of rams, means the odour of the fat of rams, which was burned in sacrifice.

Ver. 16. Come and hear, all ye, &c.] Here we must suppose the Psalmist in the temple; speaking, as is frequently the case in other places of the psalms, to the assembled people, and declaring, to the honour of God, that he had heard and answered his prayer. He mentions no particular; probably it was a deliverance somewhat analogous to that of the Israelites which makes the subject of this psalm, and from some heathen nation who had oppressed them: he had, very likely, been a prisoner and made his escape; which makes him say, "If I had regarded vanity," i. e. "If I had ever, while I was a captive among the heathen, been corrupted into any idolatrous practices, God would not have heard me;" &c. That this was a proper subject for thanksgiving we may see in Psalm, cvii. 2—9. Mudge.

REFLECTIONS.—1st; We have here,

1. The persons called upon to unite in the praises of God: All lands, not merely the people of Israel, but all the ends of the earth. Note; Though God is merciful to all, we have peculiar reason to bless him for that full and glorious Gospel which he has sent to us.

2. The manner of their praises. They must make a joyful noise, sing aloud their Creator's and Redeemer's praises, proclaim his glory; and in their lives, as well as lips, shew forth his honour.

3. The reasons why they should thus praise him. [1.] Because of his terrible works and the greatness of his power, manifested in the abasement of his enemies. Note; Every antichristian foe will be made shortly to bow at the feet of the faithful, and to know that God hath loved them. [2.] For the mercies manifested to his church of old; the remembrance of which should be ever new; such as was the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, when the sea opened a way for them to pass over; there did we rejoice in him. Note; Our Father's mercies are our own, and

should awaken our praises. [3.] Because the same protection shall be for ever vouchsafed to all the faithful. As God ever rules, and ever sees the devices of their enemies, he will disappoint them, to the confusion of his people's proud and rebellious foes. Note; Since all power is given to Christ in heaven and on earth, his faithful people may be assured that no powers of darkness shall be able to hurt them, but they shall with joy see them shortly put under his feet and theirs for ever.

2dly, They who have an interest in God, as their covenant God, ought to make their voices of grateful praise to be heard. Particularly,

1. For their lives; not only the preservation of bodily life, but more especially for the spiritual life which Christ has bestowed and maintains; and suffereth not our feet to be moved; though sore thrust at by temptation, yet by the power of grace our souls are preserved.

2. For the blessed issue of their trials. Many an enemy had harassed the land, they had been taken prisoners in the net of their oppressors, had suffered a variety of afflictions, been trampled upon and insulted by the Philistines and neighbouring nations; but it was to prove, not destroy them; and therefore they were delivered, and public tranquillity and plenty restored to them. Thus the church of Christ has been also in the furnace of affliction, under the man of sin, in Rome pagan and papal, has passed through variety of tortures by fire and water, terrible as those devouring elements, and been often reduced to the greatest distress, in order to prove the patience of the saints; but God will bring them into a wealthy or large place; as at the Reformation, when true religion reared its head; and as will be more eminently the case, when at last Christ shall come and reign over his saints gloriously. This also is the state of every faithful believer, who passes through temptation, painful as the action of fire, and deep as the floods; but the issue shall be peace; his graces, thus exercised, shall shine the brighter, and into his wealthy place, even a mansion in eternal glory, will he be brought: when he has suffered a little while for Christ, he shall reign with him for ever.

3dly, The Psalmist here, in the person of the faithful, declares the effects that God's grace and protection would have upon them.

1. He and they would offer the noblest sacrifices appointed under the law; the fattest beasts shall burn on God's altar, according to the vows they had made in trouble. Note; Since Christ's one oblation was offered, all other sacrifices of blood are abolished; but sacrifices of praise will never cease ascending from every faithful heart, and will

PSAL. LXVII.

A prayer for the enlargement of God's kingdom, to the joy of the people, and to the increase of God's blessings.

To the chief musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song.

GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. Selah.

2 That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

3 Let the people praise thee, O God; let

all the people praise thee.

4 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.

5 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

6 Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.

7 God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

will go up with acceptance in the smoke which arises from the Saviour's sacrifice, making all our offerings a sweet-smelling savour to God.

2. He calls on all who fear God to come and hear what God had done; what wonders of grace in pardoning, sanctifying, comforting, and saving his sinful soul; and this in answer to his constant and fervent prayer, which God, who knew the simplicity of his heart, had heard and granted; and for which he desires ever to bless and praise him, as for all his mercies. *Note;* (1.) We are bound, for God's glory, and the encouragement of his people, to communicate our experience of his goodness; not as vain of our mercies, as if the favourites of heaven, but as thankfully testifying our gratitude to him from whom we have received all. (2.) There can be no comfort obtained from prayer, nor any well-grounded confidence entertained of God's acceptance of us, whilst allowed and indulged iniquity remains in the heart. (3.) They who lift up holy hands, without wrath and doubting, may rise from their knees continually blessing and praising God.

PSAL. LXVII.

Title. לַמְנַחֵם בְּנוֹתָ טוֹמֹר שִׁיר *lammatafeach binginoth mizmor shiir.* We read, 2 Sam. vi. 17, 18. that when David had brought the ark to Jerusalem, he offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, as promised in the foregoing psalm, ver. 13. And as soon as he had offered them, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord: i. e. as Bishop Patrick supposes, he pronounced this psalm, wherein he manifestly imitates that form of blessing which the priests were appointed to use on solemn occasions, Numb. vi. 24, &c. See Pf. iv. 6.

Ver. 2. That thy way may be known] That is, that all the world may be sensible of the truth of the Jewish religion; and expect no blessing, but from the supreme God of the Jews. *Thy saving health, or salvation,* refers to the glad tidings of salvation through Christ. The Syriac version, in its preface to this psalm, says, "It gives us a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles, and the preaching of the Apostles." Theodoret thinks the same.

Ver. 4. Thou shalt judge] i. e. "Thou shalt hereafter govern them by righteous and good laws, who were before under the government of Satan, and had nothing to guide them but some few laws and tendencies of nature, or some precepts of an old tradition which are now almost obliterated." The word תַּנְחֵם *tanchem*, rendered *govern*, in the original, signifies, in a comprehensive latitude, all acts of conduct, as of a shepherd towards his sheep, leading them into their pasture; and so of God, leading and directing

men into those courses which are most eminently profitable for them; of a general towards his soldiers, marshalling them and going before them, and so animating them in fighting against their enemies; and of a king, ruling and ordering his subjects, as God doth those who sincerely submit themselves to him: all which the word *lead* or *conduct* may contain in it; and that will be the fitter, because the more literal, and therefore more comprehensive rendering, and to be preferred to that of *governing*.

Ver. 6. Then shall the earth yield her increase] Or, as the words may be better rendered, according to the ancient versions, *The earth hath yielded, or given her fruits.* This is an argument to enforce the universal confession, acknowledgment, and service of God, ver. 5. St. Paul uses the same argument to the heathens, Acts, xiv. 17. The 7th verse would be best rendered in the form of a benediction, like the first verse: *God bless us, even our God,* i. e. "Confer still further and greater blessings upon us at the coming of the Messiah."

REFLECTIONS.—David, as a lively member of the church of God, pours forth his prayers to him for its prosperity, and that desirable event, the conversion of the Gentile world.

1. He prays in particular for the church of God. *God be merciful unto us,* and forgive and pardon us, as sinners ever need to pray, *and bless us;* which comprehends all we can ask or think, and God sees useful for us: *and cause his face to shine upon us;* comforting our souls and cheering us, causing the sun of righteousness to arise with healing in his wings; and these are requests which every faithful believer will never cease to offer for himself and his brethren.

2. He prays for a diffusion of gospel light and grace throughout the world, that all nations might know the saving health revealed in Jesus Christ, and the way of justification through his blood and merits, and of sanctification by his Spirit.

3. That in consequence thereof they might be led to praise God, as for the light and truth dispensed, so for the protection and grace promised. *For thou shalt judge righteously,* vindicating thy believing people from every charge laid against them, and saving them from every enemy; *and govern the nations upon earth,* who shall be happy under thy safe and gentle sway. *Note;* (1.) The service of Christ is the perfect freedom and happiness of his people. (2.) The faithful shall have cause to all eternity to bless the day when first their neck was bowed to his easy yoke.

4. Great

P S A L. LXVIII.

A prayer at the removing of the ark. An exhortation to praise God for his mercies, for his care of the church, and for his great works.

To the chief musician, A Psalm or Song of David.

LET God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.

2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.

5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

6 God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

4. Great, he foresees, will be the increase of the church, under the divine blessing, by the preaching of the gospel. The earth, the various nations of it, shall yield a plenteous harvest of converted souls; and God for ever bless his faithful people, putting his fear into their hearts; and be their everlasting confidence and joy. *Note;* (1.) When we can say God is our God, we may confidently add, he will bless us. (2.) They who are interested in his love, have the increase of earth, and every creature-comfort, heightened by a sweet favour of Christ in them.

P S A L. LXVIII.

Title. למנצח לדרור מזמור שיר *lamnatseach ledavid emizmor shiir.*] This Psalm was composed by David, to be sung in the procession of the ark from Obed-edom's house to mount Zion. The several parts of it were suited to the several divisions of the march, and the whole of it adapted to so sacred and joyful a solemnity, as will appear by a careful perusal and examination of it. It refers, in a secondary sense, to our Saviour's ascension. Dr. Chandler has considered it in the most accurate manner, and we shall principally follow his observations.

Ver. 1. Let God arise, &c.] When the Levites first took up the ark on their shoulders, the singers began, *Let God arise, &c.* These are the words which Moses made use of whenever the ark was taken up for the several marches of the Hebrews through the wilderness, Numb. x. 35. As God was in a peculiar manner present in it, and as his presence was their great security from the dangers of the wilderness and the power of their enemies, when the ark was lifted up Moses prays, that *God would arise up along with it, that his enemies may be scattered, and those who hate him flee before him.* God's enemies were those of his people; and those who hated him the nations who hated them, who envied and opposed that prosperity which God was determined to procure them. David with great propriety applies these words to the translation of the ark to Jerusalem, since God was still equally present with it, and his aid necessary to the protection of that city, and to the success which David hoped for over the enemies of his religion and people. See 1 Sam. vi. 14. 1 Chron. xv. 27.

Ver. 2. As smoke is driven away] i. e. "As smoke is violently scattered and dispersed by the wind, so do thou shake and entirely disperse them with a force that they cannot resist." See Schultens in Prov. xxi. 6.

Ver. 4. Sing unto God, &c.] Sing unto God: celebrate

his name in songs: prepare the way for Him who rideth through the deserts; his name is JAH, and exult ye before him. Chandler. See Isai. xl. 2. The Psalmist here alludes to the passage of the Israelites through the desert, in their way to the Promised Land; and describes it in many of its principal circumstances in the following verses. God is said to ride, or be carried through the deserts, as the ark of his presence was carried through them, and accompanied the Israelites in all their various stages, during their continuance and pilgrimage in them. As to the derivation and proper sense of this name of God, *Jah*, learned interpreters differ greatly. Some derive it from יהיה *haiyah*, he was, he existed, abbreviated from the future יהיה *icheieh*: others take it to be a contraction from יהוה *iebovah*, *Jehovah*: But Dr. Chandler thinks with Schultens, that it comes from a word used in the Arabic dialect to denote a religious fear and reverence; according to which, *Jah* will denote the awful Deity, worthy of all reverence and fear. I cannot, however, help thinking myself, that it signifies more properly, *He that is*, simply and absolutely. See John, viii. 58. and Parkhurst on the word.

Ver. 5. A father of the fatherless, &c.] The meaning is, that God, who is present with us in his sanctuary, or in the ark of his presence, will provide for and defend, as a father, those who have been rendered fatherless by the sword; and as a judge avenge the widows' cause upon those who have unrighteously cut off their husbands; referring to the unjust wars which were made upon his people, and the cruelties exercised towards them by their enemies in their passage through the deserts.

Ver. 6. God setteth the solitary in families] Literally, *God causeth them to sit down into a family.* The word יתב-ידים *iechidim*, rendered *solitary*, signifies such as are left alone, and destitute of help; and seems to imply those whose fathers and families were destroyed either in Egypt, or in passing through the wilderness, by their enemies. Even these, *God will cause to sit down, each of them into a family; or bless them with a numerous posterity, and with a safe and comfortable enjoyment of all the social blessings attending it.* Dr. Chandler renders the next clause thus: *He bringeth forth those who were bound, with great abundance;* which, says he, undoubtedly relates to the state of many of the Jews; who were bound or fettered in Egypt, but whom God brought from thence with numerous flocks and great riches; for that they spoiled the Egyptians. Mr. Schultens gives the passage a different turn: "God brings forth those who were

7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:

8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: *even Sinai itself was moved* at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain,

whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

11 The LORD gave the word: great *was* the company of those that published it.

“were bound, into the more grateful bonds and connections of societies and family relations.” See him on Prov. xxxi. 19. It is added, *but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.* The word סוררים *forerim*, rendered *rebellious*, has a very strong and significant meaning, and denotes those enemies of the Israelites who were obstinately and madly bent on doing them mischief, and stimulated by their hatred and malice utterly to destroy them. See Hof. iv. 16. The word צחצחה *tschichbah*, rendered *a dry*, signifies *a shining, dry, barren place*; and denotes that these enemies should be destitute of, not only riches, but necessities, and of family; in a word, of all the advantages of life, and reduced to the utmost distress and poverty. See Ezek. xxvi. 4. The Chaldee paraphrase applies this verse to the state of the Jews in Egypt: “He brought out Israel, who were bound in Egypt; but Pharaoh and his army, who refused to let them go, inhabited a dry place.” Referring, I suppose, to their being stripped of their riches by the Israelites, or to their throwing up their dead bodies on the dry and sandy shore. This part of the psalm Dr. Chandler supposes to have been sung just as the Levites took up the ark on their shoulders; and it was a proper exordium to this great solemnity. It begins with a solemn acknowledgment of God, a devout prayer for the dispersion of his enemies, and an exhortation to his people to glory in and rejoice before him, and celebrate his praises, who guided their forefathers in the desert; when he redeemed them from the Egyptian bondage, avenged them of their enemies, freed them from their slavery, enlarged them into families, enriched them with the spoils of Egypt, and condemned their oppressors to poverty, disgrace, and misery. When the ark was lifted up, and placed by its staves on the shoulders of the Levites, just as the procession began, the following part of the hymn was sung, ver. 7—14.

Ver. 8. *The earth shook, &c.*] When the people arrived at Sinai, and God descended on the mountain, *the earth trembled at his presence; the heavens also dropped*, i. e. dissolved into showers, as the consequence of the mighty thunders and lightnings which bespoke the presence of the Almighty, and of the thick cloud which covered the mount. Exod. xix. 16. In the next clause, *Even Sinai itself, &c.* one of the verbs in the former clauses must be supplied: *Sinai itself shook*, or *dropped at the presence of God*: that is, as it were, flowed down and dissolved. So Deborah, Judg. v. 4, 5. in her song of triumph says, *Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchest from the field of Edom; the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped; the clouds also dropped down water. The mountains flowed down at the presence of the Lord; this Sinai [flowed down] at the presence of the God of Israel.*

Ver. 9. *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain*] What

this *shower* was, is not by all agreed. Sometimes the Israelites were supplied with wells, and at other times God gave them miraculously water from rocks. The *dropping of the heavens*, in the foregoing verse, cannot be intended; because this *plentiful rain* is spoken of as a distinct thing from it. And the description of a *shower*, as it were *voluntarily falling*, distinguished it from a thunder-shower, occasioned by the violent bursting of the clouds. I think, therefore, that this shower relates to the *manna* and the *quails* which were rained down on them from heaven. Thus God told them, *I will rain bread from heaven for you*, Exod. xvi. 4. And the Psalmist puts them in mind, *He commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them of the corn of heaven.* Pl. lxxviii. 23, 24. *He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls as the sand of the sea*, ver. 27. This may truly be called a kind of *spontaneous shower*; as both the manna and the quails offered themselves to their hands, without any pains or labour in the people to procure them. By this *shower*, says the sacred writer, *thou didst confirm thine inheritance*; (see Deut. xxxii. 9.) that is, “didst recruit and refresh thy people;” for they greatly needed it, as they were *weary*; i. e. tired and almost worn out with hunger, the hardships of which they bore with great impatience and murmuring. See Exod. xvi. 3.

Ver. 10. *Thy congregation hath dwelt therein*] There is no small difficulty in these words. The following appears to be the most natural sense of them. In the former verse the Psalmist tells us, that God had *confirmed*, refreshed, and revived his *inheritance*, by the plentiful, and, as it were, voluntary showers of bread and flesh which he rained down upon them. In these words, I apprehend, he speaks of the manner, as well as abundance, of the food he gave them; חייאתה *chaiatheka*, *thy food*;—“the food which thou gavest them, they dwelt in the midst of it.” Thus the history informs us. As to the *manna*, it is said, *In the morning the dew lay round about the host, and when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing; and they said, It is manna*: Exod. xvi. 13, 15. And as to the *quails*, the historian observes, that they were let fall by the camp, about a day’s journey on the one side, and a day’s journey on the other, round about the camp. Numb. xi. 31. This was literally *dwelling in the midst* of the food which God provided for them. Others render the word by *flocks or cattle*. Mudge renders this and the 9th verse thus: *Thou keepest suspended over it a shower of blessings, O God; and when it was weary, thyself hadst prepared thy inheritance. Thy flocks were settled in it; thou providest with thy riches for the poor.*

Ver. 11. *The Lord gave the word*] Having celebrated the power and goodness of God, which fed them in the wilder-

12 Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

13 Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered

with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.

ness, he now proceeds to speak of the great deliverances that he wrought out for them from their enemies, with respect to whom *the Lord gave the word*. The Israelites engaged them by his order, (see Numb. xxv. 17. xxi. 34.) and under his conduct and blessing obtained the victory over them. The next clause should be rendered, *Large was the number of the women who published the glad tidings*; meaning those women who, with music, songs, &c. celebrated the victories of the Israelites over their enemies, according to the customs of those times, Exod. xv. 20. 1 Sam. xviii. 6. So also in this march, between the vocal and instrumental performers, were *the damsels playing on the timbrels*. The *good tidings* are those contained in the two next verses.

Ver. 12. Kings of armies did flee apace] In the original it is, *fled away, fled away*; the reduplication of the words denoting their hasty flight and utter dissipation. The kings who commanded the armies which opposed them fled with their routed forces, and were pursued and destroyed by the Israelites: *And she that tarried at home divided the spoil*. After the conquest of the Midianites, God ordered the prey which was taken from them to be divided into two parts, between them who went out on that expedition, and the rest of the congregation who continued in the tents, Numb. xxxi. 27. and therefore this was part of the damsels' song, that the women who had the charge of the household affairs were enriched by an equal division of the enemies' spoils, in which their husbands and fathers had their share; and I apprehend, that it is the victory over the Midianites which is here particularly referred to. For, *the Lord gave the word*; avenged the children of Israel of the Midianites, Numb. xxxi. 2. *Kings of armies fled away*; five of the Midianitish kings being routed and slain, ver. 8. *She that tarried at home divided the spoil*, according to the distribution before-mentioned, vast quantities of gold and silver being taken; to which there is a plain allusion in the next verse.

Ver. 13. Though ye have lien among the pots] The word rendered pots, signifies, *kettles, pots, or furnaces*, for various uses, fixed in stone or brick, placed in double rows, and so regularly disposed for convenience and use; and refers to those pots or furnaces, at which the Israelites in Egypt wrought as slaves, and amongst which they were forced to lie down for want of proper habitations, and in the most wretched and vile attire. See Ps. lxxviii. 13. lxxxi. 6. But how great was their alteration, by the conquest of their enemies, and especially of the Midianites! See Judg. viii. 21. 26. Hab. iii. 7. "Enriched by the spoils of these enemies, ye shall now lie down; (for these words must be supplied) i. e. dwell at ease, and with elegance in your tents." *Within the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold*: These dove-like coverings denote either the rich garments or the costly tents which they took from these Midianites; and which, either because of their various colours, or their being ornamented with silver and gold, resembled the colours of a

dove, the feathers of whose wings and body glittered interchangeably as with silver and gold. See Boech. Hier. part. ii. l. i. c. 2.

Ver. 14. When the Almighty scattered kings] *When the Almighty scattered kings therein, thou didst make them joyful in Salmon*. Chandler. The kings here referred to, may be Sihon, Og, and the kings of Midian, Numb. xxxi. 8. *Therein* may refer to the country of Midian, where these kings were taken and destroyed. See Ps. lxxxiii. 9. The consequence of this signal victory was, *it was white as snow in Salmon*. This may very properly be rendered, *There was great joy in Salmon*. *Salmon* here cannot be that mount Salmon mentioned Judg. ix. 48. for this was in the tribe of Ephraim; but that Salmon, of which the Psalmist there speaks, was in or near the land of Midian, where the Midianitish kings were destroyed; and was probably one of the high places of Baal, from whence Balaam viewed the people of Israel, Numb. xxii. 47. The construction may be very properly, "When the Almighty scattered kings in it, namely, in Salmon, he made his people very joyful there." We will subjoin Dr. Chandler's paraphrase of the last four verses: ver. 11. And not only were they thus miraculously fed by the benevolent hand, but made to triumph over all their enemies who molested and opposed them. For thou gavest forth the order to attack. Thou didst assure them of success, leddest them forth against their adversaries; and their victories were celebrated by large numbers of matrons and virgins, who shouted aloud, and sang these joyful tidings: ver. 12. "The kings of armies fled away. They fled away utterly discomfited; and they who abode with their families in their tents received their shares in the spoils of their conquered enemies: ver. 13. Though when you were slaves to the Egyptians, and employed in the servile drudgery of attending their pots and bricks, you appeared in the most sordid and reproachful habits, and took up your dwellings in the most wretched and miserable huts; yet now you are enriched with the gold and silver of your conquered enemies, possessed of their tents, and arrayed with garments shining and beautiful; you resemble the dove's feathers, in which the gold and silver colours, mixed with each other, give a very pleasing and lively appearance." Ver. 14. When the Lord thus scattered and overcame kings for the sake of his inheritance, how were thy people refreshed! How great was the joy thou gavest them in Salmon, where they obtained, beheld, and celebrated the victory! How proper were these reflections upon the past interpositions of God's providence in favour of his people, upon this great event, the translation of the ark to Jerusalem! This was the place where God was now to be peculiarly present; his dwelling-place, where the great earnest of his especial protection and blessing was to dwell; the same ark which went before them in their marches through the wilderness, and out of which God, as it were, went forth, subdued their enemies before them, and

15 The hill of God *is as* the hill of Bashan; an high hill *as* the hill of Bashan.

16 Why leap ye, ye high hills? *this is* the hill *which* God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever.

17 The chariots of God *are* twenty thou-

sand, *even* thousands of angels: the LORD *is* among them, *as* in Sinai, in the holy *place*.

18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men: yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*.

settled them peaceably in that good land, which he had promised to their fathers. As it was now to be fixed at Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom, that city was henceforward to become the city of the living God; its prosperity to be secured by his presence, and in that the welfare and safety of the whole nation. When the ark came in view of mount Zion, (the place of its fixed residence for the future,) and probably when they began to ascend it, I apprehend they sang the following part of this sacred composition; ver. 15—18.

Ver. 15, 16. *The hill of God is, &c.] Is the hill of Bashan, is the craggy hill of Bashan, the hill of God? Ver. 16. Why look you with envy, ye craggy hills? THIS IS the mountain God hath desired to dwell in: yea, the Lord will dwell there for ever.* Reading the words thus, with an interrogation, they appear suitable to the occasion, and worthy of the genuine spirit of poetry. “Bashan may boast of its proud eminences, its craggy summits, but is this the hill where God will fix his residence?” He poetically introduces Bashan and the other little hills as looking with envy on mount Zion, that she, above all the other mountains, should be favoured with the residence of the eternal God, and become the fixed seat of his ark. He tacitly bids them cease their envy, and, by pointing to mount Zion, tells them, *This is the hill in which God desireth to dwell:* “See, there is the hill which God hath chosen above all others to inhabit! Yea, the Lord will dwell there for ever. His ark shall never be removed from it to any other dwelling whatsoever.”

Ver. 17. *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, &c.] The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands; the Lord is among them, O Sinai, in the sanctuary.* See Deut. xxxiii. 2. *The chariots of God* here must mean, those invisible and heavenly chariots, that attendance of angels, which in scripture is ascribed to God. See Isai. lvi. 15. 2 Kings, vi. 17. These chariots are here said to be twenty thousand; a certain number put for an uncertain, denoting a large multitude. The sense of the whole verse seems to be this: “Sinai may boast of the honour of the appearance of God, and the attendance of ten thousand of his saints, when he gave the law from thence: But now there are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands of the angels and chariots of God attending the ark of his presence. The same God who was formerly encompassed with his angels on thee, O Sinai, is now among them here; and his future residence will be with them in his sanctuary on mount Zion.” There is somewhat peculiarly pleasing and poetical in this part of the psalm. Bashan was a high hill, and situated in the territories of the Hebrews; and if the loftiness of its summits could have given it any claim to the preference, Zion must have lost the honour of being the residence of the ark of God’s

presence. But the interrogation, if that rendering be allowed, expresses a contempt for Bashan, and comes with peculiar propriety, if, as we suppose, this part of the hymn was sung just when the procession came within view of Zion. The representation of the hills, as leaping with a kind of eagerness to be chosen for God’s residence; or rather, as envying mount Zion for the choice that God had made of it, is in the true spirit of poetry, which can make mountains speak and move, rejoice and grieve, when necessary to enliven the scene, and adorn the subject. The introducing the *angels of God* as descending on the hills, and his *chariots* as attending and guarding the ark into its habitation, in much larger numbers than they were on mount Sinai, is finely and sublimely imagined; to create in the people a firm belief, that Jerusalem should be under the special care of God, and that the army of heaven should be stationed there for the protection and safety of the ark and city; and nothing could have been more elegantly conceived, or better adapted to the occasion. When the ark had ascended mount Zion, and was deposited in the place assigned for it, the singers proceeded, ver. 18—24.

Ver. 18. *Thou hast ascended on high]* “Thou hast now marched up to the heights of mount Zion, and taken possession of this sacred hill;” God being figuratively said to do, what the ark had done; as he peculiarly resided, and gave frequently visible appearances of his majesty and glory in it. *Thou hast led captivity captive:* “Thou hast led captive our enemies by enabling us to subdue them, and reduce them into subjection to us;” referring either to the many signal victories that God had given them in former times, or the victories that David himself had obtained, by God’s assistance, over the Philistines, and which he mentions here as an earnest of his future successes. *Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious:* i. e. those malignant adversaries, who, through hatred and envy, opposed David’s government, and disturbed by their invasions the quiet of his reign. *For these,* or (as the word should be rendered) *amongst these, God received gifts;* “Thou hast received gifts from men, even from amongst the refractory and envious opposers of thy kingdom.” These gifts were the spoils of his conquered enemies, particularly the Philistines; which God is said to *receive*, or to have taken from them, as they were taken under his conduct by David, and given to enrich his victorious people; and part of which David himself consecrated, *that the Lord God might inhabit,* might have a place where to rest and abide for ever. See Isai. xiii. 20. The immense charge of this procession, and the whole apparatus for the reception of the ark, was undoubtedly supported, at least in part, by the riches that he obtained as the fruit of his victories. And it is probable that David had now, in some measure, formed the scheme of erecting a temple to the honour of God; *that*

19 Blessed be the LORD who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.

20 He that is our God is the God of salvation: and unto God the LORD belong the issues from death.

21 But God shall wound the head of his

enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.

22 The LORD said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea.

23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy

the Lord might have an habitation; and that he determined to make the voluntary offerings of his friends, and the spoils of his conquered enemies, subservient to his great design. It may be further observed, that these words are capable of a different rendering: *Thou hast received gifts, that the Lord God might dwell amongst men, even amongst the rebellious*: i. e. "Thou hast subdued thine enemies, and rendered them tributary to thy throne, that they might enjoy the benefit of thy protection, and live happily under thy government;" God being said to receive the gifts which were offered to David, and to reign over them, as they were subjected to David's crown, who was God's king, established by him in Sion. But I rather choose the former sense, as it seems most agreeable to the apostle's application of the words to our blessed Saviour, Ephes. iv. 8. to whom they are in a higher sense applicable than they could be to David; who personally ascended up to the highest heavens; led captivity captive, by triumphing over all his conquered enemies; and, having received gifts from his heavenly father, gave them unto men, as was most conducive to the establishment of his kingdom over all the nations of the earth.

Ver. 19. *Who daily loadeth us*] *Who bears our burdens every day.* The verb *אָמַס* *amas*, rendered *loadeth*, signifies both to take on one's self, or carry a burden, and to place a burden on another; and hence it is used figuratively for to bear and carry another with tenderness and affection. In this sense it is applied to God himself, to express the constant care that he had taken of his people, and how he had supported them, and taken, as it were, upon himself the burden of their affairs. See *Isai. xlvi. 3.* *Deut. i. 31.*

Ver. 20. *Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death*] The original words may certainly be rendered, *The goings forth of Jehovah the Lord are unto death; or, the goings forth of death belong to the Lord Jehovah.* In the first part of this verse the Psalmist declares, that God is to us a God of salvations, all our deliverances come from God; and in the next verse he says, *God will wound the head of his enemies; and the outgoing to death, or of death,* may include both. It is He that directs them, suffers them not to approach his people, but ordains them to reach his restless and implacable adversaries: the one he redeems from, the other he condemns to death. Death seems to be here represented poetically, as a person going forth and marching in various ways, and by different methods, to spread destruction amongst mankind; but as under the restraint of God, and in all his marches directed by his pleasure.

Ver. 21. *God shall wound, &c.*] According to the emphasis of the original word, *God shall exhaust,—draw forth the blood of, the head of his enemies,* or utterly destroy them by the sword. "He will avenge himself on their

"devoted heads; nor shall their strength and craft be able to protect them from his indignation, if they continue wickedly to disturb me in the possession of that kingdom to which he has advanced me."

Ver. 22. *The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, &c.*] Abner, in his conference with the elders of Israel, tells them, *The Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.* 2 Sam. iii. 18. David knew himself to be raised up by God for this purpose, who had promised him success over all his enemies. He seems to have been now apprehensive of some new disturbances from the Philistines; and therefore to this promise he refers in the first words of the verse: *The Lord said.* And such full assurance he had that God would perform the promise made to him, as that, whatever princes and forces should oppose him, he was firmly persuaded God would as powerfully appear for him, as he did in the victory over Og, king of Bashan, and when he delivered his people from the Egyptian army, by giving them a safe passage through the Red Sea.

Ver. 23. *That thy foot may be dipped*] *That thou mayest shake thy foot in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.* The verb refers to both clauses; and no word could be more proper. The motion of the foot, and the lapping of a dog's tongue in the blood of slaughtered enemies, both answering to the sense of the original word; which properly signifies to draw water by moving the pitcher here and there. The meaning of the verse is, that if the enemies of God's people should continue to invade and harass them by war, they should be entirely cut off by the sword, and their slaughter so great, as that the victorious army should be forced to trample on their dead and bleeding bodies, and the dogs should satiate themselves by lapping up their blood. The words are the description of a complete victory, and of what happens after a bloody engagement. Here also every part of this period suits the circumstance and the occasion. David had now accomplished the great design upon which his heart was set, and addresses himself to his God, as having taken possession of, and fixed his residence on Mount Sion. In consequence of which, David assures himself of the perpetual safety and prosperity of his people: thus triumphing over his enemies, who attempted to disturb his reign, and dispossess him of Jerusalem, but whose armies God enabled him to vanquish; great numbers of whom he had reduced into captivity; from whom he had obtained great riches, as the fruit of his victories, received gifts as tributary to his crown; and consecrated great part of the spoils he had taken from them to God, particularly to enable him to provide for the expences of this magnificent

dogs in the same.

24 They have seen thy goings, O God; *even* the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.

25 The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after; among *them were* the damsels playing with timbrels.

26 Bless ye God in the congregations, *even* the LORD from the fountain of Israel.

27 There *is* little Benjamin *with* their ruler, the princes of Judah *and* their council, the princes of Zebulun, *and* the princes of Naphtali.

28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength:

nificent procession. His breaking out immediately, upon a review of these favours, into the solemn adoration of God, for thus continually upholding and protecting his people; as the God of salvation, as the sovereign director of the outgoings of death; and declaring his full assurance, that his vengeance should be exerted on all his incorrigible enemies, and that from his holy habitation on Mount Zion he would render his people equally victorious over them, as he did formerly over Pharaoh and the king of Bashan, must strike every attentive mind with a religious pleasing surprize; and is an argument of the warmth of David's piety, and indeed naturally arose from the consideration that he was now under God's peculiar protection; and of the liberty he had of frequenting his courts, and asking his direction in every future time of need. When the ark was thus safely deposited, when the sacrifices were offered, the solemnity nearly concluded, and the whole assembly about to return back, the singers struck up, and joined in the following part of this noble anthem.

Ver. 24. They have seen thy goings, O God] These words contain a sort of triumph, that this great work of translating the ark was now so happily accomplished. *Thy people have seen thy goings—thy marches, O God*; the procession stopping several times, and being performed in several sorts of periods, in proper succession one after another, for the ease of the carriers of the ark, and for performing some sacred rites, which were appointed on this occasion. 2 Sam. vi. 13. 1 Chron. xv. 26. *Even the marches of my God, my king, into the sanctuary*; i. e. the tabernacle which David had prepared for the reception of the ark of God, whom he publicly acknowledges as his sovereign and king.

Ver. 25. The singers went before] This verse and the following give some description of the procession. *The singers went before*; for David had ordered the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren for singers, by *lifting up the voice with joy*; 1 Chron. xv. 16. *After these came the players on instruments*, lutes, and harps, which are played on by the singers; and between both these, *virgins* playing on timbrels, and with their voices celebrating the praises of God. The next verse contains what they sang on this occasion, in concert with the band of music. We find it was customary, among the Gentiles themselves in their solemn processions, and before, and after, and during their libations and sacrifices, to sing hymns in praise of their respective deities: and when they celebrated the supposed advent of their gods, at particular times, and in particular favourite places, it was with the greatest demonstrations of joy, with dancing, music, and songs; and in these things consisted one great part of their religious worship. See Callimachus's Hymn to Apollo, ver. 11—20. in the

translation, and the Hymn to Ceres at the beginning; Horace. and Catullus's Secular Odes; and Exod. xv. 1.

Ver. 26. Bless ye God in the congregations] i. e. "Let all the assemblies of his people, and all who join them, celebrate the wonderful works and praises of God; *even the Lord* (repeat the words *bless ye*) *from the fountain of Israel*;" i. e. all you who are of the posterity of Israel: Deut. xxxiii. 11. 28. It became them in an especial manner to bless God for the signal favours that he had bestowed upon them. See Hosea, xiii.

Ver. 27. There is little Benjamin with their ruler] There is no need of this supplemental preposition *with*; for as Benjamin is styled *little*, because he was the least of the tribes, so he is called their *ruler* or commander, because Saul, their first king, was of that tribe; and I apprehend that David particularly mentions the tribe of Benjamin not only to do honour to them, but to shew their affection to him, and attachment to his interest, by attending him, as he now made his public entry as king of Israel into Jerusalem, established himself in the throne in that capital, and thereby cut off all hopes of the kingdom's ever returning to the former tribe and family. It is no wonder he should *mention the princes of Judah and their council*; because he was of that tribe, and elected by them to be their king. This tribe was certainly the *council* or chief support of the Israelitish constitution, both in the cabinet and in the field; in the former it had the lead: the founder of this tribe was in a peculiar manner worthy of the title of *counsellor*; he being the person who prevailed over his brethren, not to kill, but sell their brother to the Midianites: he acted as a counsellor to Jacob himself, in persuading him to consent to their going into Egypt; nay, he was a counsellor to Joseph too, whose policy he baffled in the most pathetic speech that can be conceived. The dignity of counsel belonged to his descendants, as they partook of the honours of David, elected from among them; whom all the tribes acknowledged as their lawful sovereign, and from whom descended a very long race of kings; as they had in their tribe the throne, the temple, and the metropolis; and as all the tribes were enjoined to go thither at all solemn festivals to worship. We need not mention that our Blessed Lord, styled the *Mighty Counsellor* by the prophet Isaiah, was descended from, and crowned the dignities which always belonged to this tribe. See Durrell's Parallel Prophecies, p. 52. *The princes of Zebulun and Naphtali* are added, as the most remote, to shew the unanimity of the whole nation, and of all the tribes far and near, in attending this solemnity; to testify their willing acknowledgment of David for their king, and their consent that henceforward Jerusalem, the city of David, should be declared and esteemed as the capital of the whole nation.

Ver. 28. Thy God hath commanded thy strength] i. e. The great

strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.

29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.

30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, *till every one* submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people *that* delight in war.

31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises *unto* the LORD; Selah:

33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, *which were* of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, *and that* a mighty voice.

great power of the Israelites, and the height of glory and strength to which the kingdom of David had arisen, was the work of God; which naturally makes way for the petition following, *Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.* "Let the foundation of our present happiness be firm and durable."

Ver. 30. Rebuke the company of spearmen] So our translators, though they have placed in the margin *the beast of the reeds.* The *beast of the reeds* is the *crocodile* or *river-horse*, which both lay among the reeds that grew on the banks of the Nile: and as it is a very proper description of the Egyptian tyrant, the meaning will be, that God would repress his power, and preserve his own people from being overrun and destroyed by it. See Boet. Hieroz. lib. iii. p. 985. and Lowth's Prelections, p. 73. 8vo. The Psalmist adds, [*Rebuke*] *the multitude of the bulls*, i. e. according to Bishop Patrick's explanation, their great numbers of *captains*, as furious as bulls; the original word אַבְיִיר *abbiir*, signifying *strong, robust*, and being applicable to men, bulls, horses, and all strong and furious animals: —*With the calves of the people*; i. e. according to the learned Bishop, *soldiers*, as insolent as young heifers; —*Till every one submit himself with pieces of silver*, as we render the next clause; or "become tributary to his power." I would observe, says Dr. Chandler, for the further explication of this part of the verse, that the persons meant are figuratively described by the objects of their idolatrous worship. The Egyptian king is *the beast of the reeds*, or the *crocodile*, which was sacred in some parts of Egypt. The congregation of *bulls*, are his *princes* and *nobles*, who worshipped the *bull*, together with the *calves*, which were held sacred by the people, or the *people* who worshipped them; and the description of this people, who worshipped those calves is, "They severally trampled on the ground;" namely, by walking in procession, or dancing to the sound of their silver *sistrums*, which made a tinkling noise in honour of these vituline deities. I shall express the sense in the words of the learned and ingenious Mr. Merrick:

The beast, that from his reedy bed,
On Nile's proud bank uplifts the head,
Rebuke indignant, nor the throng
Forget, from whose misguided tongue,
The heifer, and the grazing steer,
The offer'd vow unconscious hear;
While to the silver's tinkling sound
Their feet in solemn dance rebound.

See Apul. Metam. lib. ii. p. 371.

But, continues Dr. Chandler, may not the word *trampling*

be referred to God? *Rebuke the beasts of the reeds, trampling on the pieces of silver*; so calling with contempt their images or idols, which were plated over with beaten pieces of silver; referring to what God is said to have done to the idols of Egypt, Exod. xii. 12.; Numb. xxxiii. 2. So that the meaning of the words is, "Rebuke and break the power of the Egyptian crocodile, his princes, and nobles, who pay homage to their bulls; and all his people, who stupidly worship their calves, and dance in honour of them to the tinkling sounds of instruments and bells: trample under foot their silver-plated idols, and utterly disperse the people who delight in war."

Ver. 31. Princes shall come out of Egypt, &c.] Rather, *Let princes come;—Let Ethiopia stretch, &c.* The word חַשְׁמַנִּים *chashmannim*, rendered *princes*, signifies a princely person, accompanied by a numerous attendance; Parkhurst thinks it signifies persons in great haste. By *Ethiopia* many understand the country properly so called, and I see no reason to depart from this sense: the country is put for the inhabitants of it. The words may be rendered *Let Ethiopia exercise her hands*, or accustom herself to lift them up to God; or *teach and direct her hands towards God*: and the meaning is, that God would so protect and defend Jerusalem, where the ark of the presence was now placed, as that the inhabitants of Egypt and Ethiopia, and all the enemies of his people, so far from regarding it with a hostile disposition, should reverence it as the habitation of God; send solemn embassies to it, with sacrifices in honour of him; with uplifted hands devoutly worship before his sanctuary, and so become the real patrons and protectors of it: but, doubtless, the passage has a much higher meaning; and refers also to the conversion of the Gentiles, and their submission to the kingdom of Christ.

Ver. 33. To him that rideth upon the heavens, &c.] *The heavens which were of old*, means, the heavens which existed from the beginning of the creation; and God is said to *ride upon them*, or *through them*, either to denote his omnipresence, or to signify that he is the proprietor and lord of them, and overrules all appearances in them, to serve the purposes of his own providence, and for the protection and safety of his people; as Moses expresses it: *There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth on the heavens in thy help.* Deut. xxxiii. 26. i. e. "Who comes in the storms, the thunder and lightnings, the artillery of heaven, to thine assistance." For thus it follows, *Lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice*, literally, *He will give with his voice a mighty voice.* Thunder is described in Scripture as the *voice of God*; (Ps. xxix.) and

it

43 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in

the clouds.

35 O God, *thou art* terrible out of thy

it is peculiarly awful and terrible in the eastern and warmer parts of the earth.

Ver. 34. His excellency is over Israel] *His highness or majesty*: he is the universal sovereign; but his kingdom is exalted over Israel in a particular manner. He hath taken them for his peculiar inheritance; and by them alone he is acknowledged as universal Creator; the supreme Lord of heaven and earth. *His power is in the clouds*: he who is exalted in an especial manner over Israel, is that mighty God who dwells in the heavens, and manifests his power in the clouds thereof; when he sends forth his voice in the dreadful thunder.

Ver. 35. O God, thou art terrible, &c.] I would join the words thus; *O God, the God of Israel, thou art terrible out of thy holy places*. Heaven was his sanctuary of old; his earthly sanctuary was on Zion; he was worthy to be feared, as inhabiting both; and he is represented as going out of them, to take vengeance on the enemies of his people; and as dreadful, on account of the judgments, which from thence, as the places of his dwelling, he executes them. *He it is that giveth strength and power unto his people*. Though the marks of his displeasure are dreadful to his enemies, yet he gives fortitude and courage unto his people, inspires them with resolution and vigour, and renders them victorious over all who oppose them. *Blessed be God!* How glorious is the conclusion of this most admirable hymn! David exults in the successful translation of the ark into its fixed habitation; and that he had now his king and his God more immediately present with him, who marched in solemn procession with his ark, to take his future residence in Mount Zion. He describes that procession with pleasure, as accompanied with instrumental and vocal music, and at which the princes of all the tribes of Israel assisted, and which was graced with a choir of virgins exciting the whole assembly to celebrate the praises of the God of Israel. He particularly mentions the tribe of Benjamin as present; a happy circumstance, which he could scarce have expected, as the kingdom was departed from them, and the crown transferred to himself and family; the tribe of Judah, as the most powerful, and those of Naphtali and Zebulun, the farthest distant of all the rest, to shew the perfect unanimity of the whole nation in submitting to him, and acquiescing in Jerusalem as the capital of the kingdom. He devoutly acknowledges God as the author of his own and his people's prosperity; and prays that he would establish and continue it; that the kings of the earth might reverence God's sanctuary in Jerusalem, and there present their offerings before him; that God would restrain the Egyptian king, keep him from all hostile invasions of the city and people of God, and not permit the worshippers of crocodiles, and bulls, and calves, to harass his dominions, or corrupt his subjects; and that he would dissipate in general all who delight in the oppression and cruelties of war. He prays even for the conversion of Egypt to the knowledge and worship of the true God; that Ethiopia might stretch forth her hand in solemn adoration of him, and that all the kingdoms of the

earth might celebrate the praises of Jehovah, who rules in the heavens, rides through them in the stormy clouds, and terrifies the nations with the voice of his thunders. He concludes with exhorting this grand assembly to acknowledge the almighty power of God, who was peculiarly the God and king of Israel; who was present in his heavenly and earthly sanctuary, dreadful in the judgments that he executed on his enemies; but the author and establisher of the power and prosperity of his people. On all these accounts, he was worthy to be blessed for evermore. How highly did this tend to promote the firm adherence of the whole assembly to the worship of their God, and to establish their faith and hope in the protection of his power! Dr. Chandler observes, at the close of his excellent comment on this psalm, that the divisions he has made of it seem natural and easy, are pointed out by the subject-matter, and render the whole of it a regular, well-connected, and elegant composition. Without this, or some such method, it appears broken, and its parts independent on each other; the expressions will be many of them unintelligible, and the occasion and propriety of them scarcely discernible. Michaelis has attempted to explain this psalm, but has fallen very short of Dr. Chandler. See the additional volume of his notes to Bishop Lowth's Prelections, p. 139. We shall conclude our critical annotations with a few of Dr. Chandler's remarks upon the whole anthem.

And, first, let us take notice of the great and glorious subject of the hymn. It is the God of the Hebrews, and designed to celebrate his praises, on account of the perfections of his nature, and the operations of his providence. And with what dignity is he described! How high and worthy the character given him; in every respect suitable to his infinite majesty, and the moral rectitude and purity of his nature! How grand are the descriptions of him, as the omnipresent God, inhabiting his sanctuaries both in heaven and earth! as the original, self-existent Being, which his name *Jehovah* signifies; the tremendous Being, worthy of all adoration and reverence, included in the name of *Jah*! As the Almighty God, encompassed with thousands and ten thousands of his angels, and innumerable chariots, which stand ready prepared in the armoury of heaven! who rides through the heavens in his majesty: whose voice is in the thunder, who makes the clouds and vapours of heaven subservient to his pleasure, and at whose presence the earth, the heavens dissolve, and the highest hills seem to melt away like wax! Descriptions the most sublime in their nature, and which tend to strike the mind with a holy reverence and awe. And as to his moral character and providential government of the world, he is represented as the righteous God, the hater and punisher of incorrigible wickedness, the father of the fatherless, the judge of the widow, who blesses men with numerous families, breaks the prisoner's chains, and restores him to his liberty; the God and guardian of his people, the great disposer of victory, and giver of national prosperity; the supreme author of every kind of salvation,

and

holy places: the God of Israel *is* he that giveth strength and power unto *his* people. Blessed *be* God.

and as having death under his absolute command, and directing the outgoings of it by his sovereign will. This was the God of the ancient Hebrews. This was the God whom David worshipped, and whom all wise and good men must acknowledge and adore. Nor is there one circumstance or expression in this noble composition, derogatory to the majesty and honour of the Supreme Being, or which can convey a single sentiment to lessen our esteem and veneration for him.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have here, in the first place,

1. David's prayer for the dispersion of the enemies of God and his people, and for the comfort and joy of the children of God. It may be considered as prophetic of the Messiah's appearing, *Let God incarnate arise, and let his enemies be scattered*, the powers of earth or hell which oppose his kingdom in the world: *Let them also that hate him, whether men or devils, flee before him*, vanquished by his almighty arm; *as smoke is driven away, so easily and thoroughly drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God* the Redeemer, when either in present judgments he shall visit them, or in the great day of his appearing and glory, arise to consume them with the brightness of his coming. *But let the righteous, those who are accepted in him, and sanctified by his Spirit, be glad when they see his day: let them rejoice before God*, in the present joy of his salvation, and in hope of the complete redemption which awaits them, from sin, death, and hell; *yea, let them exceedingly rejoice, with exultation proportioned to the greatness of the salvation.*

2. He magnifies God as the king of heaven, the self-existent Jehovah. Jesus is this JAH, the self-existent, self-sufficient God, the object of the eternal praises of men and angels, the guardian of his afflicted church and people, raising up families of the faithful among the Gentiles that were solitary and desolate; delivering the bondsmen of sin and Satan from their chains, and bringing them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; but leaving the rebellious sinners, whether of Jews or Gentiles, or false professors, to perish in the dry land of ignorance, infidelity, and obstinate impenitence.

2dly, God's wondrous works are here recorded to his glory, and for his people's comfort; and they may be considered,

1. In a retrospective sense, as relating to past mercies conferred on the Jewish nation.

2. As a glorious prophecy of the gospel church, under their head Christ Jesus; leading up his faithful people from the bondage of sin, and his oppressed church from the power of antichristian foes; as the captain of their salvation going before them, and by his word and Spirit directing their march through this howling wilderness, the world which lieth in wickedness. At the promulgation of his Gospel the powers of earth were shaken; and before his presence, the hearts of proud sinners, though exalted as mountains in height, flowed down in lowliest abasement. By the plentiful effusion of his Spirit in the ministrations

of the Gospel, the souls of weary and heavy-laden sinners were refreshed, and, into his church admitted, dwelt with comfort there, where, with such a profusion of goodness, the blessings of pardon, grace, consolation, glory, were prepared for every poor and perishing soul. By his apostles and ministers, divinely commissioned, he gave the word; he qualified them for their work, and accompanied their preaching with demonstration of the Spirit; and multitudes, *an army*, as the word *company* may be rendered, readily engaged in the warfare, notwithstanding all the dangers: even women (alluding to the women who sung the victories of their generals) helped in the Gospel. The powers of the heathen, though long persecuting, were vanquished by the word of truth; and their kings, converted, became nursing-fathers, while the church, as a conqueror, divided the spoils, the souls of men rescued from heathenism, and the power of Satan. Long had these lain in the corruption and defilement of their fallen nature, as is the case of every sinner till saved by grace; but now were adorned with the garments of salvation, bright as the silver wings of the dove, and beautiful in holiness as her glowing feathers in the sun. And when the final day of recompence comes, and at the battle of Armageddon, Rev. xvi. 14—16. all opposing potentates shall finally be overthrown; then white as snow in Salmon shall the faithful shine for ever perfect in holiness.

3dly, We have,

1. The strength and stability of the church of Christ. High and strong as Bashan, vain are all the efforts of the potentates of earth against it: though they threaten to overwhelm it, God's presence in the midst of her is a sure protection, and for ever he will watch over and preserve the interests of his faithful people.

2. Angelic hosts are her constant guard; the thousands of angels stand around their Lord in shining ranks, ready to obey his high commands, and minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. Heb. i. 14.

3. The Lord is ascended up on high, to take the throne, and guide, govern, and preserve his faithful people; angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject unto him. He hath *led captivity captive*: like a conqueror, death, hell, and all the powers of darkness, bound in chains, follow his triumphant car: his people are delivered, and shout for victory. He hath *received gifts for men*, or *given gifts unto men*, whether ministerial gifts, to qualify them for preaching his Gospel; or the gifts of grace, which he bestows on his people for strength, comfort, and edification: *yea, for the rebellious also*, such as all men are by nature and practice, till changed by divine grace, and made obedient to the faith; *that the Lord God might dwell among them*, as a reconciled God in Christ, manifesting his favour and love to those who were once rebel sinners, making them fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. *Note*; (1.) We can never enough admire and adore the triumphs, grace, and glory of our ascended Saviour. (2.) A pardoned rebel never felt such gratitude to his generous prince, as the pardoned sinner ought to feel towards his gracious lord.

4. He

P S A L. LXIX.

David complaineth of his affliction: he prayeth for deliverance: he devoteih his enemies to destruction: he praiseth God with thanksgiving.

To the chief musician upon Shoshannim: *A Psalm of David.*

SAVE me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.

4. He is glorified in the salvation of his faithful ones, for which they ever bless and praise him. *He loadeth us with benefits, spiritual and temporal; or, he will bear us up, carry us in his arms, that we may be safe. He is our God, ever interesting himself for the faithful; the God of our salvation, who hath begun, and will perfect it in their behalf; and unto him belong the issues from death; he will preserve the faithful from the deadly devices of their foes, Satan, the world, and sin; will open a door of hope to them in the grave; and, in the resurrection-day, give them victory over death for ever.*

5. He will destroy every enemy at last. The head of the old serpent shall be finally bruised, and the obstinately impenitent, who have joined the devil and his angels in their rebellion, shall be thrust down with them into the place of torment.

4thly, Such as were the former deliverances of God's people, such, and more eminent, shall be the salvation and glory of Christ's church.

1. They shall be brought from Bashan, as Israel from the mighty army of Og, victorious over every oppressing and persecuting power, whether pagan, Mahometan, or papal; and shall come up from the depths of their distresses, under the leading of the great Captain of their salvation. *Note; However oppressed the cause of Christ may be for a while, the triumphing of his foes is momentary, and their ruin near and terrible.*

2. The people of God will celebrate this victory, as of old in the temple the Levites and singers magnified God, on their successes gained by the armies of Israel. *They have seen thy goings, O God, how thou, my God and king, goest in the sanctuary, manifesting his presence in his church, and exerting his power for the salvation of his faithful people, and the destruction of their foes. The apostles and preachers, as sweet singers, proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, and all the congregations of true believers, without distinction of sex or station, male and female, princes and subjects, shall unite in the song of praise for Gospel mercies, flowing from the fountain of Israel, the incarnate Saviour. Little Benjamin may have some reference to Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, who was of that tribe, as Zebulun and Naphtali to the first apostles, who were chiefly of the land of Galilee, where these tribes lay; while the princes of Judah, and their council, may signify the first Gospel churches and their ministers, established at Jerusalem and in the neighbourhood.*

3. They will depend on God for the perfecting of his own work in the faithful, and in the world. *Thy God hath commanded thy strength; which may be considered as an apostrophe to the Messiah, strengthened for the great work of*

2 I sink in deep mire, where *there is no standing*: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that

redemption; or as the encouragement which the Psalmist suggests to the people of God. Since God, their God, hath commanded their strength, they may be assured of an answer to their prayer, *Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. Note; (1.) All our spiritual strength comes from God: whatever we enjoy, it is by his grace that we are what we are. (2.) If we have experienced the supports of his arm, we must in faith continue to wait upon him, and may be in this way assured he will strengthen us unto the end.*

4. They expect to see the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom universally, and the subduing of all his enemies. *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem, shall kings bring presents unto thee, becoming converts to the gospel, and joining themselves to the church of Christ; Princes from Egypt, the old enemy of God's people, shall make their submission; and Ethiopia, the most distant realms of the heathen, stretch out their hands unto God in prayer, or as laying hold on Jesus's strength to make peace with him; and those who will not bow to him, must perish. The enemies of God, though strongly armed, furious, and numerous as herds of bulls, and supported by a deluded people, kept like calves in ignorance and stupidity, will be rebuked, till every one submit himself, be made to yield; or rather, as the words may signify, though glorying themselves, or treading proudly, because of their riches, they shall be brought low; and the people who delight in war, have long waged it against the faints, be finally and eternally scattered from the face of the earth.*

5thly, The psalm concludes with an exhortation to the church of God to unite heart and voice, as in duty bound, in ascribing glory to God their Redeemer.

1. As ascended to his throne in the heavens, and ruling over all.

2. For the mighty efficacy of his Gospel, sent forth into all lands.

3. For his operations of grace and providence towards his faithful people. In him is everlasting strength; *his excellency, all his glorious perfections, is over Israel, engaged for their comfort and support; and his strength is in the clouds: they are his instruments of vengeance; on them he went up to heaven, with them he shall descend to judgment.*

4. For the awful visitations on his enemies. *O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places; in present strokes of vengeance, and especially as ready to consume the wicked with the brightness of his coming.*

5. For the preservation of his Israel. *The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people; supports them under all difficulties, strengthens them for their work, and enables the faithful to persevere in their fidelity.*

Blessed

would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away.

5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness: and my sins are not hid from thee.

6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.

9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

10 When I wept, *and chastened* my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

11 I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.

12 They that sit in the gate speak against me; and *I was* the song of the drunkards.

13 But as for me, my prayer *is* unto thee, O LORD, *in* an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

Blessed be God: let that Redeemer, whose grace works all for us, and in us, receive the praise of all.

P S A L. LXIX.

Title. למנצח על שושנים לדוד *lammatsch al soshannim ledavid.*] As a great part of this psalm is most applicable to David's distress at that time, it is most likely that he composed it when under the persecution of Saul: and Bishop Patrick supposes that he revised it again upon those straits to which he was reduced by Absalom, and at which time he supposes him to have added the 35th verse, where he mentions Zion; for that was not in the possession of the Israelites during the reign of Saul. Every one must perceive, that there are many passages in this psalm which, if they are applicable to David at all, refer in a much higher sense to the passion of our Blessed Saviour. Theodoret observes, that it is prophetic, and foretold the sufferings of our Saviour, and the final destruction of the Jews on that account. The title of the Syriac version is to the same purpose. Dr. Patten, in his Vindication of David, observes very judiciously, that the Book of Psalms was dictated by the Spirit of God, and some of them prophetic of the kingdom and person of Christ; many parts of them being spoken by David, not only with reference to his circumstances at that time, but likewise as Christ's representative. This psalm, which seems to breathe the most vehement resentment, and, in our translation, appears like an execratory prayer upon David's enemies, is to be understood in this sense, and is cleared of that imputation by the authority of St. Peter and St. Paul, Acts, i. 16. 20.; Rom. xi. 9. the former of whom cites these passages as prophetic of the traitor Judas. This psalm is by St. Paul interpreted as foretelling the state, not only of Judas, but of all those his obstinate countrymen who rejected the salvation offered by Jesus Christ. In the same passage Isaiah is cited as foretelling their spiritual blindness. David, therefore, and Isaiah mean the same thing, a prediction of what the Spirit of God foresawed them, though their forms of expression be different. The two apostles cite their respective passages as prophecies, but in the imperative form; a testimony which I presume sufficiently frees that form, wherever David in similar cases makes use of it, from all imputation of rancorous resentment. And this apostolical interpretation of the scope of this psalm,

which seems to be execratory, is indisputably the true key to open the design and meaning of all others of the like tendency. David in all of them, however his forms of expression may vary, pronounces only the decrees of God against the enemies of Jesus Christ, whose person the Psalmist here assumes, as in many other Psalms.

Ver. 1. *For the waters are come in unto my soul*] The figurative expressions in this and the following verse denote very great difficulties and distresses. See on Pf. xlii. 7.

Ver. 4. *I restored that which I took not away*] *What I have not taken away, I restore upon the spot.* i. e. "I have been so far from provoking their malice, that I have been content, rather than quarrel with them, to part with my own right, and to make them satisfaction for wrongs which I never did them." The Liturgy version, which is followed by many, begins the fifth verse with this clause: to which the next is supposed to refer; *O God thou knowest my simplicity,* &c. as much as to say, "Thou knowest the simplicity of my heart, and that though I have been guilty of offences towards thee, yet have I never injured those who thus cruelly hate and persecute me."

Ver. 7. *For thy sake*] i. e. "Merely because I adhere to thee, and will use no unlawful means to right myself." See 1 Sam. xxiv. 10, &c.

Ver. 9. *For the zeal of thine house*] That is, "My concern for thy holy worship has drawn a confederacy of irreligious men upon me, who are now just upon the point of compassing my ruin." But this verse had a more eminent completion in our Redeemer. See John, ii. 17. and Rom. xv. 3.

Ver. 10. *When I wept, &c.*] *When I bemoaned my soul with fasting.*

Ver. 12. *They that sit in the gate*] i. e. As it is generally interpreted, the judges or chief persons of the state; for the gates of cities were the places of judicature, as we have had occasion frequently to remark. But St. Hilary interprets this of those who sat to beg at the gates of the city; which seems a more probable interpretation, better to agree with the design of the Psalmist, and to suit with the drunkards mentioned in the next clause.

Ver. 13. *But as for me, my prayer, &c.*] *But as for me, let my prayer come unto thee, O Lord, in a favourable moment.*

Mudge,

14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

15 Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy loving-kindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.

18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.

19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.

20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and

I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.

21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

22 Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.

23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

24 Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

25 Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.

26 For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.

Mudge. *In the truth of thy salvation* means, "according to the faithfulness wherewith thou hast promised to deliver those who depend upon thee."

Ver. 16. *Thy loving-kindness is good*] Gracious or bountiful. The Hebrew word *חַסְדֵּךָ chafdeka*, in this, as in many other places, signifies abundance of goodness or mercifulness.

Ver. 19. *Mine adversaries are all before thee*] i. e. "None of them, nor of their secret plots and subtle lies, whereby they seek to defame and undo me, are hidden from thy all-seeing view."

Ver. 20. *Reproach hath broken my heart*] Dr. Delaney observes, that there were two circumstances of distress which attended upon David's fall, not sufficiently considered, though they are beyond all question the greatest and the severest which human nature can suffer: the first is, the distress that he endured on account of the obloquy and reproach brought upon the true religion, and the truly religious, by his guilt: and the second, the reproach and endless insults brought upon himself, even by his repentance and humiliation before God and the world. Both these, says he, are fully set forth in the present psalm, from ver. 3. to 20. Let any ingenuous man, who feels for virtue, and is not scared to shame, put the question to himself: I appeal to his own heart, whether he would not infinitely rather die than endure the state there described: In one day forsaken by his friends, scorned by his enemies, insulted by his inferiors; the scoff of libertines, and the song of fops! What then must we think of the fortitude and magnanimity of that man who could endure all this for a series of years? Or rather, how shall we adore that unfailling mercy and all-sufficient goodness, which could support him thus, under the quickest sense of shame and infamy, and the deepest compunctions of conscience; which could enable him to bear up steadily against guilt, infamy, and the evil world united, from a principle of true religion! and in the end even rejoice in his sad estate; as he plainly perceived it must tend finally to promote the true interest of virtue, and the glory of God; that is, must finally tend to promote that interest,

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which was the great governing principle and main purpose of his life! Life of David, book iv. chap. 3.

Ver. 21. *They gave me also gall, &c.*] This was only figurative in respect of David, as it is here expressed, but it was literally true of our Saviour on the cross; and therefore what follows may as truly, and perhaps more properly, be considered as predictions of the punishment which should be inflicted on the persecutors of our Lord, than as imprecations of David against his enemies. See the first note on this psalm. The word *רַגֵּב rəṣṣ*, rendered gall, is frequently joined with wormwood. See Deut. xxix. 18. And from a comparison of this place with John, xix. 29. Bochart thinks the herb *רַגֵּב rəṣṣ*, in this psalm, to be the same as the evangelist calls hyssop; a species of which in Judæa, he proves from Isaac Ben-Omran, an Arabic writer, to be bitter; adding, that it is so bitter as not to be eatable. And Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Nonnus, took the hyssop mentioned by St. John to be poisonous. Theophylact expressly tells us, that hyssop was added as being deleterious, or poisonous; and Nonnus, in his paraphrase, says,

One gave the deadly acid, mix'd with hyssop.

See Bochart, vol. ii. p. 590. and Parkhurst on the word *רַגֵּב*.

Ver. 22. *Let their table, &c.*] *Their table shall be for a snare before them, and their peace-offerings for a trap.* This and the following verses are to be understood in the future tense, by way of prediction, and not of imprecation. The meaning of the whole verse is this, "The oblations and prayers of those who have dealt thus barbarously with me, shall be so far from pacifying God, or being accepted by him, that, like the offerings to false gods; styled the preparing a table, &c. Isai. lxx. 11. they shall provoke God, and turn to their mischief." See Rom. xi. 9. The 25th verse had a most eminent completion in the final destruction of the Jewish state and nation.

Ver. 26. *And they talk to the grief*] *And they add to the pain.* See Bishop Hare, and the LXX.

X

Ver.

27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness.

28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.

30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

31 *This* also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

32 The humble shall see *this*, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.

Ver. 27. Add iniquity, &c.] Or give, or permit, as the original word may be rendered. This sentence will be best translated according to the old version; Let them, or permit them to fall from one wickedness to another. It is not unusual with God, as a punishment of some great sin or sins, though not to infuse into men any malignity, yet by withdrawing his grace, and leaving them to themselves, to suffer them to commit more sins, and to be so far from being reformed, as daily to grow worse and worse; to be obdurate, and so, finally, never to enter into God's righteousness: i. e. into that way of justification and obedience, which is required by him, and will be accepted of him; or into his mercy, as the original word frequently signifies, so as to be made partakers of it.

*Ver. 28. Let them be blotted out of the book] This means no more than that they should be cut off, and die before the usual time. We have before observed, that God is sometimes represented as recording and entering in a book the conception, birth, sufferings, actions, and punishments of his people: so here, and in other places, he is represented as keeping a list or roll in which the names of all his people are entered. The allusion seems to have been taken from the custom of generals and commanders of armies, who, upon the desertion or death of a soldier, strike him out of the muster-roll. This is what Ezekiel alludes to, chap. xiii. 9. where he calls it; *The writing of the house of Israel*; and to be written or entered in that list, signified the same thing as being acknowledged for one of God's people. Compare Isai. iv. 3. As great immorality and apostacy, such as are the subjects of this psalm, may well be deemed a sort of spiritual desertion, the allusion is applied here with great propriety.*

Ver. 29. But I am poor and sorrowful] But as for me, though I am low and full of pain, thy salvation, O God, shall protect me. See Bishop Hare and Mudge.

Ver. 31. This also shall please the Lord, &c.] i. e. This is the most acceptable sacrifice which can be presented to him; and this shall be used by the Christian church, instead of the sacrifices of the law. The horns and hoofs are mentioned as being conspicuous in an ox going to be sacrificed; being probably gilded, and adorned with flowers, as among the Romans and other people.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have here, in the suffering son of Jesse, a lively figure of the suffering Son of God, of whom these things are chiefly spoken.

He pours out his complaints to God, and they are many and grievous. Troubles, deep as the swelling flood, compassed him, and he was ready to sink under them; exhausted with strong crying and tears, and failing because no help appeared. Hated, persecuted by many and mighty foes,

and cruelly as wrongfully: his dearest friends were afraid to own him, lest they should be involved with him in ruin: his zeal for God exasperated his enemies, and brought upon him a load of reproaches and infamy: and when he was engaged in the holy exercises of religion, they ridiculed his humiliations: the great, who sat in the gate, maligned and abused him; and the drunkards, in their midnight revels, made him the subject of their sport and songs. And herein he was,

1. A type of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose soul in the garden, deluged with anguish, seemed as if weighed down with the insupportable load, and the humanity unable to support it: with strong crying and tears he then made supplication to God, and on the cross with bitterness lamented the divine dereliction: though sinless and harmless, he paid the debt of sin that he had never contracted, and satisfied that justice which he had never injured: yet did those sinners, whose guilt he bore, persecute him with ceaseless hatred: fixed on his destruction, they suborned false witnesses against him, to take away his life: he was disowned by every friend; betrayed by one disciple; denied by another; forsaken of all: loaded with the most malignant reproaches by his enemies; his tears over them, and his efforts to save them, despised and rejected; insulted, with the most unrelenting cruelty, by the meanest as well as greatest; by governor, priests, elders, soldiers: his miracles imputed to diabolical agency; and his importunate cries upon the cross mocked and ridiculed.

2. Of believers, whose trials are often severe, and help often long delayed; whose souls are ready to faint; the objects of the world's malice and scorn; forsaken and given up by their once dearest friends and relations; treated as mad, and derided as foolish; opposed by the great, and often literally still the drunkard's song. But through much tribulation we must thus enter into the kingdom of God, through evil report and good report; and, while we carry our griefs to a compassionate Redeemer, must patiently expect the salvation of God.

2dly, While we have a gracious God to fly to, we need not be concerned about the malicious reproaches of the proud.

David, oppressed, has recourse to God for deliverance from his dangers, that his enemies might not prevail, nor his soul sink under his troubles. And he enforces his requests, (1.) By the acceptableness of the time: never could relief come so welcome, as when he is reduced so low. (2.) By the multitude of God's mercies, which now would be especially manifested. (3.) By his truth, his faithfulness being engaged for the answer of humble and fervent prayer. (4.) By the views of his great trouble, which God well knew; the shame, reproach, and dishonour that he endured

33 For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.

34 Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.

35 For God will save Zion, and will build

the cities of Judah : that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.

36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it : and they that love his name shall dwell therein.

endured for his sake, which required speedy help, and the comforts of his countenance, that he might not be discouraged. (5.) By the desolateness of his estate : all other friends have forsaken him, therefore the more needs he God to appear for him. (6.) By the insolence and cruelty with which he was treated, which he knew God would not behold with unconcern.

Such requests, in the days of his flesh, the Son of David made. God knew what sufferings he endured ; what trouble and reproach he bore from foes without ; what anguish, from the withdrawing of his sensible favour ; how exceeding sorrowful, and how heavily his soul was burdened ; no friend to pity or relieve ; in his enemies' hands, ready to be swallowed up ; the pit of the grave opening ; death, with all its horrors, the death of the cross, approaching ; and even when in his agonizing pangs extended on the tree, there insulted with vinegar mingled with gall, to mock his raging thirst. In his distress he prayed, and pleaded the multitude of his Father's mercies, and his truth engaged for the fulfilment of his promises. He begged to behold the light of his Father's countenance, which was hid from him ; to be supported and carried through his work of redemption ; that those who hated him, Satan and his servants, might be disappointed, and the grave unable to keep him prisoner : that he might be delivered from all his enemies, redeemed from death and hell, and finally victorious : and God abundantly answered his prayers in the resurrection-day, when all his reproach and sorrow were for ever rolled away, and his glory great as his sufferings had been.

Such also must be our recourse in our distresses, such our pleas, and such then assuredly will be the deliverance that we may expect from all our enemies.

3dly, We have a prophetic denunciation of God's righteous judgments against the Jews ; and we see them this day lying under his curse, and, in the fulfilment of the prophesy, standing evidences for the truth of the Christian religion. We have here,

1. The judgments denounced. (1.) Their comforts should ensnare them ; or the sacrifices, part of which belonged to the offerer, to which they so obstinately adhered, in opposition to the true sacrifice of the Redeemer, whom they rejected ; these should be made the means of hardening them against him, instead of leading them to him, as we see they were. (2.) They should be given up to judicial blindness, rejecting the clearest declarations of their own prophets. (3.) They should be in continual terrors, or bow down their backs always, as the apostle renders the words, Rom. xi. 10. which was not only the case when the Romans came and besieged Jerusalem, and made such a dreadful massacre ; but to this day, they are aliens in almost all lands : and almost every where have been more or less harassed and plundered, and are still exposed to the same

sufferings ; not to speak of their horrors, when they shall see him whom they have pierced, coming in the clouds of heaven. (4.) They should feel the severity of his wrath, which they eminently did when their city and country were utterly destroyed and the land ploughed up ; so that for a while none dwelt there ; and to this day these desolations in a great measure continue, very few Jews being now found in the whole land of Palestine, and these miserably oppressed by the Turkish governors. (5.) They should add sin to sin ; having crucified the Master, they would persecute the disciples, and, instead of being convinced by all that they suffered, would continue hardened and inveterate as ever. And, lastly, that their name should be blotted out from the living, as was literally in a great measure, fulfilled, when the Romans slew such vast numbers, that they seemed to threaten an entire extinction of the whole Jewish race ; and spiritually is accomplished in their exclusion from the blessings of the gospel, till they be again recalled, previous to the establishment of the universal reign of Christ.

2. The cause of these judgments is mentioned : their persecutions of Jesus, whom they esteemed stricken and smitten of God ; and whom they with wicked hands crucified and slew ; and, insatiate in their rage against his cause, contrived every method to insult God's wounded ones, as the word signifies, those who suffered for their fidelity to Jesus. *Note* ; It is doubly cruel to grieve those already weighed down with sufferings ; but diabolical malice sports at misery.

3. The Psalmist, in the person of the Redeemer, commends himself to God. *But I am poor* ; in his humiliation for our sakes he became poor ; so poor that he had not a place to lay his head ; and *sorrowful* : from the cradle to the grave, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : sorrows, like unto which were no sorrows. *Let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high*, or, *thy salvation shall set me up on high*. Either it is a prayer for, or his confident expectation of, the glory which should follow after his sufferings, when by death having overcome every enemy, he should arise, ascend, and reign on his eternal throne. *Note* ; The poor and sorrowful believer may be comforted. If we have been planted with Jesus in the likeness of his sufferings and death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

4thly, David, in the prospect of this salvation of the Redeemer and his faithful people, triumphs, and calls on heaven and earth to join his praises.

1. He declares his own purpose to exalt and magnify God's holy name, and is assured that these grateful songs will please him beyond the most expensive sacrifices. These are all now abolished by the offering of the body of Jesus once for all ; but the sacrifice of praise, with which God is well-pleased, will never cease being offered in earth and

P S A L. LXX.

David soliciteth God to the speedy destruction of the wicked, and preservation of the godly.

To the chief Musician, A psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

MAKE haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD.

2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.

3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame, that say, Aha, aha.

heaven for redeeming love. So cheap yet so acceptable a sacrifice then who will grudge?

2. The faithful people of God shall rejoice in beholding his salvation, manifest in the resurrection of Jesus. They will be encouraged now to seek God, because since he lives, they shall live also. Though in general poor in this world, and prisoners for Christ, God will not despise their prayer; he will hear their cry, and will help them. *Note*: As long as we have a heart to pray, we shall always have cause to rejoice.

3. He calls upon all men, and angels, yea, and every creature that moveth through the paths of the water, to praise God with him for his glorious salvation. His Zion shall be protected; his church, and the cities of Judah, the different assemblies of the faithful, be built up. The faithful seed shall inherit a portion in God's holy mountain, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; and *they that love his name*, his person, his worship, his word, his ways, shall dwell therein, as at present the children of God's family, and shortly to possess the enduring mansions in the skies, where, with Jesus, their exalted head, they shall take up their glorious and eternal abode. Well do such inspiring hopes demand our warmest praise!

P S A L. LXX.

Title. לִמְנַצֵּחַ לְדָוִד לְהַזְכִּיר *lamnatseach ledavid lebozkhir.*] This psalm is almost word for word the same with the latter part of the 40th; but as there is some little difference in every verse, Bishop Patrick thinks that in some new danger, and probably that into which Absalom brought him, David took a review of the 40th, and, with some little alteration, composed this as a distinct prayer. The LXX add, by way of explanation to the end of the title, "That God had saved him."

Ver. 1. Make haste] Or, be pleased. This is a word added from Ps. xl. 13.; and indeed I take that word, says Mr. Mudge, together with the two former verses, properly to belong to this psalm.

REFLECTIONS.—1. David here seeks for help *in haste*, because his danger was imminent. *Note*; Urgent trials should awaken fervent prayer.

2. He prays that his enemies may be disappointed and confounded. They were maliciously bent to hurt him; sought after his soul, to ensnare him with sin, or to rob

4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.

5 But I *am* poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.

P S A L. LXXI.

David, in confidence of faith and experience of God's favour, prayeth both for himself, and against the enemies of his soul: he promiseth constancy: he prayeth for perseverance: he praiseth God, and promiseth to do it cheerfully.

IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.

him of his life; and already triumphed, as if they had succeeded: but he expects to see them turned backward, and their wicked devices baffled.

3. He prays that the people of God may rejoice, especially on observing his gracious interposition in his deliverance, and magnify God for his mercy. They are described as *seeking God*, this being the constant delightful task of the faithful, to pray and not faint; as *loving his salvation*, loving Jesus, the author of the salvation, and holiness, the appointed way.

4. He expresses his confidence of help, while he pleads his wants. *I am poor and needy*; spiritually needy, and poor in spirit; *but thou art my help and my deliverer*, my Almighty Saviour in time of need.

Jesus was thus sought for, his precious life pursued, and his enemies confident of success; but in his prayer he prevailed: Satan and all his emissaries were confounded in the day of his resurrection, and God, his helper and deliverer, made no tarrying, nor suffered his Holy One to see corruption; therefore does his church triumph in his exalted head, and say with joy, *The Lord be magnified*.

The faithful servants of God are also the mark of the world's enmity, and the devil's hatred; and they may expect many a sore thrust from both: but they know where their help lies, and make haste to God in prayer; and though he may sometimes seem to delay his coming, he is not slack concerning his promises, but exercises their graces to confirm and strengthen them, and makes no tarrying when their deliverance is necessary. However sorely they may be exercised, the issue of their trials will be peace and joy; and they who love God's salvation, and seek him without ceasing, will, in time and eternity, by delightful experience, bear testimony to his rich grace, and ascribe to him the everlasting praise.

P S A L. LXXI.

This psalm is so similar to the former, that, perhaps, says Mr. Mudge, as it is without a title, it is a continuation of that psalm: The author acknowledges the continued series of God's goodness to him, even from his birth, and implores him not to leave him now in his old age to the malice of his enemies, but to grant him his protection. Towards the end he is assured of this, and at length obtains it, and praises God for it. The Jews who were carried

2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me: for thou *art* my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

5 For thou *art* my hope, O Lord God: *thou art* my trust from my youth.

6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise *shall be* continually of thee.

7 I am as a wonder unto many; but thou *art* my strong refuge.

8 Let my mouth be filled *with* thy praise, and *with* thy honour all the day.

9 Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.

10 For mine enemies speak against me: and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together.

11 Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for *there is* none to deliver him.

12 O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.

13 Let them be confounded *and* consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.

14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness *and* thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers *thereof*.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only.

17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto *this* generation, *and* thy power to every one *that* is to come.

19 Thy righteousness also, O God, *is* very high, who hast done great things: O God, who *is* like unto thee!

20 *Thou*, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again, from the depths of the earth.

21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery,

captive into Babylon, with king Joachim, made use of this psalm, as appears from the title of the Vulgate and LXX. See Ps. xxxi.

Ver. 2. *Deliver me, &c.*] *Of thy clemency rescue me, and deliver me: Incline, &c.*

Ver. 3. *Be thou, &c.*] *Be thou unto me for a rock of refuge.*

Ver. 7. *I am as a wonder*] That is, "as a frightful spectacle to a great many, who were afraid to come near me;" *At a gazing stock to the multitude*, Green renders it.

Ver. 15. *For I know not the numbers thereof*] *Though I know not the number of them; i. e. of thy righteousness or mercies, or thy salvation and deliverances; they being so numerous, that it is not possible to count them. I will go, in the next verse, is rendered by Mudge, I will come; that is, into thy temple, by virtue of these acts of prowess which God has exerted in my favour.*

Ver. 17, 18. *O God, thou hast taught me*] *O God, thou hast conducted me from my youth, and thus far may I declare thy wondrous works, ver. 18. and even to old age and grey*

hairs, O God, forsake me not: So far, that I may declare thy arm to every generation that is to come: Mudge.

Ver. 20. *And shalt bring me up again, &c.*] This is an allusion to men who are fallen into a deep pit of water. The meaning is, "Thou shalt draw me out of the extreme danger in which I am plunged, and wherein I shall perish without thy help."

Ver. 22. *I will also praise thee*] *Therefore will I praise thee.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The longer the faithful soul has been found in the good ways of God, the stronger it grows. *Inflaurabit iter vires*—the powers will be renovated by the journey. Thus David here appears.

1. He professes his confidence in God, amid the sharp trials with which he was now exercised. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust*; delighting to repeat the pleasing subject, and dwelling upon the glorious foundation on which his hope was built; a rock, no tempest could shake; a fortress, no foe could scale; a strong refuge, where he was safe from danger; a strong habitation, where he rested in comfort.

even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee: and my soul, which thou hast re-

deemed.

24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

fort. *Note;* They who know God, his faithfulness and grace, will with comfort and confidence be engaged to trust him in every time of need.

2. He remembers to the glory of God, and for his own present encouragement, the past deliverances that he had experienced. From the womb he had been holden up, protected amidst the dangers of infancy and the perils of youth; and therefore now he has a divine confidence that God will not fail to save him, and resolves never to cease from praising him. *Note;* The more we reflect on what God hath done for us, it will the more engage our trust in him, and awaken our praises for him.

2dly, Filled with hope and joy, the Psalmist is happy in the midst of all his sorrows, and the greatest of his troubles cannot silence his incessant praise.

1. He expresses his lively hope in a variety of instances; *I will hope continually*, at all times, and in all situations; when others despair of my recovery, my heart shall not fear. (1.) God's power and promise are his grand supports; *I will go in the strength of the Lord God*, disclaiming all self-sufficiency, and strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; for duty I shall be enabled, and in danger be secure. *I will make mention of thy righteousness only*, his fidelity to his word. *Note;* Though we have neither strength nor righteousness in ourselves by nature, there is such fulness of both in the Redeemer, that we may be always most confident in him, when most despairing of ourselves. (2.) His past experience encourages his present hopes: God had been the guide of his youth, and he had hitherto acknowledged his wondrous preservation; therefore in his old age, he trusts, God will not forsake him, but enable him to leave with the rising generation, a testimony of God's faithfulness and care, as a grateful acknowledgement to his glory, and an engagement to them to make him their hope and trust. *Note;* [1.] Early impressions of divine grace are a singular mercy, and demand suitable improvement. [2.] The longer we live under the Divine protection and favour, the more earnest should we be in commending these good ways of God in which we have walked, to the generations to come. (3.) In many great and sore troubles he had been supported, therefore in the present, he trusts he shall not faint; *thou shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth*; though he seemed as one dead and buried in his grave, he was assured that his case was not beyond the Divine power, nor his circumstances so desperate, but God could retrieve them. *Note;* [1.] Great and sore troubles are here often the portion of the righteous; but he who permits them to fall into these difficulties can and will safely extricate them out of them. [2.] Though the faithful go down at death into the grave, and the earth closes upon them, they have a hope still full of immortality, a resurrection-day shall

quicken their dust, and bring them from these depths of the earth again. (4.) He not only expects deliverance from his troubles, but an increase of his greatness and consolations. Thus the darkness of our troubles, like the cloud which covers the sun, serves but to heighten our joys; when at God's word the cloud vanishes, the sun of divine grace shines with double lustre, and the trial of our faith contributes to the increase of our honour and glory. (5.) His enemies, who sought his hurt, must with shame retire, and find it vain to contend with him whom God protects. *Note;* All the spiritual enemies of the faithful shall at last gnash in despair, when they see them set above their malice, and receive the eternal desert of their deeds.

2. He exults in joyful praises. *All the day would he be speaking forth God's righteousness and his salvation*; His justice in the destruction of the wicked, his enemies; his faithfulness and mercy in his own preservation; and, above all, the great redemption wrought out by Christ through his death on the cross, on account of the merit of which alone salvation is offered to sinners: these deserved continual thanks; therefore he resolves, *I will praise thee more and more, or add to all thy praise*; since every day afforded some new occasions, called for increasing acknowledgments, and left him far behind, unable to keep pace even in gratitude with the mercies continually showered upon him, the number of which surpassed his comprehension. They were like the God who bestowed them, very high, above all blessing and praise, and without parallel; for in heaven or earth none can compare with him, or do as he doth. With joy therefore, surpassing great, his soul within, redeemed by divine grace and truth, shall swell with gratitude too big for utterance; his voice be heard aloud in praise; and, calling in the sacred aid of music to assist the expressions of his enraptured spirit, the psaltery and harp should pour forth a flood of harmony, and raise his song high as heaven's arch, and rival the angelic choir above. *Note;* (1.) Praise is the natural expression of the grateful heart, the bounden duty of every believer, and an acceptable sacrifice to a gracious God. (2.) When we sing with our lips, let us be careful to make melody with our hearts, and not forget the sense in the sound. They sacrifice profanely who merely love to hear their own voices; and music is not harmonious to God, which draws off our attention from the divine object of our praises, to the manner and performance of it. (3.) It is the joyful hope of every faithful believer, however feeble now his efforts, that shortly he shall be enabled to offer more worthy praises, when, with his golden harp before the throne, he shall have learnt the song of Moses and the Lamb, and shall join those heavenly hosts, whose ceaseless songs fill God's eternal temple with seraphic harmony.

P S A L. LXXII:

David praying for Solomon, sheweth the goodness and glory of his kingdom in type, and in truth of Christ's kingdom: he bleisseth God.

A Psalm for Solomon.

GI V E the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.

4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.

6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown grafs: as showers that water the earth.

7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

12 For he shall deliver the needy when he

P S A L. LXXII.

Title. לְשׁוֹלוֹמֹה *lshlomoh, For Solomon*] This psalm was composed by David when he placed Solomon on the throne, and caused his subjects to acknowledge him as their sovereign, 1 Chron. xxix. 24. The sight of this raised the spirits of the good old king, and he indited this poem upon the occasion; when the Spirit of God directed him to use some expressions in it, which are properly applicable to the Messiah only, of whom Solomon was a type. Many of the Jewish rabbies themselves interpret these expressions of the Messiah.

Ver. 1. Give the king thy judgments, &c.] I do not apprehend, says Dr. Chandler, with the generality of interpreters, that by *the king*, and *the king's son*, David means himself and his son; but Solomon only, to whom both the titles agree. As he was David's son, and anointed by him king during his life-time; and as the first part of the psalm is precatory, the verbs in general should be rendered in that form throughout, except where the sense and connection require a different translation.

Ver. 3. The mountains shall bring peace] Peace is here used for that prosperity, ease, and plenty, which are the effects of peace; when the mountains and hills are cultivated and tilled, and so made capable of producing an abundance of grain. Chandler: who renders the verse, *Let the mountains and hills produce the plenteous fruits of peace*; and begins the 4th verse, *because of righteousness*, [or through the prevalence of righteousness in the land] *let him judge, &c.*

Ver. 5. They shall fear thee] Let both high and low equally reverence him throughout all generations; whilst the sun and moon shall endure. Chandler. The meaning is, that all posterity shall revere Solomon continually, and esteem him as the wisest and justest prince: But the more sublime sense is, that all generations shall adore the Messiah.

Ver. 6. He shall come down, &c.] Dr. Chandler explains this verse thus, "Let his government be gentle and refreshing, as the rain that descends on the mown grafs,

"and as the plentiful showers that sweep through the "earth."

Ver. 8. He shall have dominion, &c.] This may mean, "From the Sinus Arabicus to the Mediterranean sea;" or may relate more generally to the extent of Solomon's power by sea: *From the river unto the ends of the earth*, means, from the river Euphrates, which was the boundary of the promised land on the east side, to the tract of country along the Mediterranean sea, which was the boundary of the land on that side. The reader must observe in how much loftier a sense the words are understood when applied to Christ, whose kingdom was to spread itself over the whole world. The same may be said of the following verses.

Ver. 9. In the wilderness] דָּוָי *ziim*, is derived from a root, which signifies *to be dry* or *thirsty*, and is applied to barren grounds or deserts, parched up for want of springs and rains; and it means here, and in the next verse, where it is rendered *isles*, the inhabitants of those desert countries, and particularly the people and kings of *Arabia Deserta*. The kings of Arabia are expressly said to *bring gifts*, or pay tribute to Solomon, 1 Kings, x. 15. *Sheba* and *Seba* are also countries of Arabia. The queen of Sheba brought him the most valuable presents. *To lick the dust*, signifies to prostrate themselves before the king, and kiss the ground, in token of reverence towards him; as was, and still is the custom of the eastern nations. D'Herbelot informs us, that *kissing the feet*, and *lying prostrate* in the dust before a person, were very ancient customs in the east; and it appears that they were not mere expressions of reverence, but (which is not well known) of vassalage; and kissing the earth, of the most abject vassalage, sometimes arising from the low rank of those who paid their homage, and sometimes from dejectedness and adulation. When, therefore, the Psalmist says, *He shall have dominion, &c.* he marks out extent of empire: When he adds, *they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow, &c.* it would be extremely wrong to suppose that he is only specifying one particular

crieth; the poor also, and *him* that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually: *and* daily shall he be praised.

16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the

fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and *they* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

17 His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and *men* shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

18 Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

19 And blessed *be* his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory; Amen, and Amen.

20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

cular part of that extensive authority, which he had before expressed in general terms; for he greatly enlarges the thought. It is equivalent to saying, that those wild Arabs, whom the greatest conquerors could never tame, shall bow before him, or become his vassals; nay, his enemies, and consequently these Arabs, among the rest, shall *lick the dust*, or court him with the most abject subjection. See *Observations*, p. 254. and *Isai.* xlix. 23. It is added in the 11th verse, that *all kings shall fall down before him*; which, in the highest sense, can relate only to Christ, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. See *Matth.* ii. 1. 11. xii. 42.

Ver. 14. And precious shall their blood be in his sight] That is, "he shall look upon the life of the poor to be as really valuable as that of others, and not suffer their blood to be shed with impunity."

Ver. 16. There shall be an handful, &c.] "Let there be, or, *though* there be but an handful of corn thrown into the ground on the top of the mountains, in stony and barren ground, it shall produce an abundant increase; it shall spring up so plentifully, as that its waving and rustling on the hills shall resemble the shaking and noise made by the cedars on mount Lebanon." It is a strong figure, but well denotes the great increase and strength of the standing corn. It is prophetic of the vast plenty of Solomon's reign, but seems to have a further view to the miraculous increase of the Christian religion. Dr. Chandler reads the whole thus: "Let there be but a handful of corn thrown on the land, upon the top of the mountains, yet the produce of it shall arise with such plenty and strength, that it shall wave as the cedars of Lebanon; and the inhabitants of the city shall flourish and increase as the grass upon the ground."

Ver. 17. His name shall be continued] Let his name be perpetuated by a numerous posterity while the sun shall last. Chandler. When we hear David singing the triumphs of his son, to whom the everlasting kingdom was promised, in such strains as these, can we give any tolerable account of these things, but by supposing David to understand that the son promised to him, in whose time righteousness and truth were to be established, was the very seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head. Of the same person David and the prophets foretel, that he should rule over all nations; that men should be blessed in him; that all nations should call him blessed; which is the distinguishing

characteristic of the blessed Seed promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, See Bishop Sherlock on Prophecy, *Disert.* 2.

Ver. 20. The prayers of David—are ended] The whole book of Psalms is one continued proof that there is no regular order preserved in them. It is highly probable, that this is the last psalm which David composed, as he died soon after his son's coronation. But it by no means follows that there are no other psalms after this in the present collection composed by David. There are certainly many such; perhaps more than is generally thought; and it appears matter of great doubt, whether many of those which are inscribed, *Psalms of, or for Asaph*, were not written by David. The second book of psalms, according to the Hebrew division, ends here. Instead of *The Prayers of David*, the LXX read, *The Psalms, or Hymns of David*. The third book of Psalms contains seventeen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The psalm opens,

1. With a short prayer, which may be considered as David's request for his son Solomon, that he might be qualified for the work of governing his kingdom with equity and righteousness; or rather it is his prayer, in the person of all the faithful, for the Messiah, that he might appear, be exalted to his glorious throne, having all judgment in heaven and earth committed to him, and be qualified for the perfecting of the redemption of his faithful people, by such a fulness of gifts and graces, as might enable him to work out for them, and in them, an everlasting salvation.

2. He prophetically describes the excellence and glory of the Messiah's government, wherein, though some things may be applicable to Solomon, others are only true of him whom Solomon prefigured, and therefore to him the whole may be best referred.

(1.) He shall rule with righteousness, and be the protector of the poor or afflicted ones from their oppressors. When, sensible of their spiritual wants and wretchedness, they cry to him, under the strivings of Satan, their great enemy, or of wicked men who persecute them, being in themselves helpless and destitute, he will deliver and save them, redeeming their souls, and rescuing them by his grace from the snares of the wicked one, and the deceitfulness of sin. And if they suffer unto blood, he will keep a precious memorial

P S A L. LXXIII.

The Prophet, prevailing in a temptation, sheweth the occasion thereof, the prosperity of the wicked, the reward given thereby, diffidence; the victory over it, knowledge of God's purpose, in destroying of the wicked, and sustaining the righteous.

A Psalm of Asaph.

TRULY God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped.

3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4 For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm.

5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.

morial of it, and reward their martyrdom with a crown of glory.

(2.) Under his government peace shall be diffused, abundance of peace; peace with a reconciled God, peace in our guilty consciences, peace in our dispositions renewed by Divine grace, peace within preserved, when all without is most threatening, and this effected by him who is the great meritorious cause of all our mercies.

(3.) His enemies shall feel his arm, and the rebels against his government be broken in pieces: whether Satan, the arch-rebel, or those antichristian powers which have long persecuted and harassed his church, their end will be to be destroyed for ever.

(4.) His government shall be most desirable and blessed. Like the rain on the new-mown grass, the graces and consolations of his Spirit shall descend on his people, to refresh them; and, flourishing under these heavenly influences, the souls of the righteous shall bring forth those fruits of holiness abundantly, which are to the praise and glory of God. Does it appear then that we are the subjects of his kingdom by these flourishing fruits of peace within, and piety without?

(5.) His dominion shall be universal, from sea to sea, from one end of the earth to the other. The inhabitants of the most desolate parts of the earth shall some time or other have his gospel preached to them, and yield obedience to the faith; and his enemies, whether Jews or Gentiles, be brought to lick the dust, laid low in deepest humiliation at his feet. The richest kings of the earth shall bring their presents, and the distant monarchs, in the farthest isles of the sea, offer their tribute, as a token of subjection. They shall worship before him, as their God and king, and all nations serve him, when the kingdoms of the world at last shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Christ.

(6.) All his subjects shall honour and praise him; he shall live the joy of his people; and the gold of Sheba, the most precious offerings, even the bodies, souls, and spirits, of his faithful people, infinitely more precious than gold that perisheth, shall be presented to him: prayer shall be made for him, for the prosperity and increase of his kingdom, or through him, as the mediator between God and man, through whom alone we can be accepted; and daily shall be praised in his church, and by his faithful subjects, happy under his gracious sway.

(7.) His increase will be wonderful and great. There shall be a handful of corn, which may denote Christ himself, upon the top of the mountains, on Calvary, sown in his death as corn in the earth, or it may refer to the word of gospel-grace, which at first was but as a handful, and seemed as

unlikely to flourish as seed sown on a mountain; but great was the effect; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, inestimably rich and precious shall be the fruits which spring from the death of Christ; or it refers to the vast increase of converts which should be made to the truth, as soon as it was preached; and they of the city, the inhabitants of the spiritual Jerusalem, shall flourish as the grass of the earth.

(8.) His kingdom shall be everlasting. While sun and moon endure, he will have a people upon earth; and when sun and moon shall fade and fail, still he shall reign, his throne abiding as the days of eternity, blessing for ever his faithful people, and the subject of their everlasting praises.

2dly, The Psalmist concludes with enlarged praises, excited by the glorious prospect that he had before him.

1. He blesses the Lord God, the Redeemer, the God of his Israel, whose wonders of creation, providence, and especially of grace in his incarnation, death, and sufferings, were so stupendous, and deserving to be had in everlasting remembrance.

2. He prays for the manifestation of his glorious kingdom upon earth, when he shall take to him his great power, and reign; and, while he breathes the longings of his heart, professes his confident expectation of it in due time, Amen and amen, so let it be, so shall it be. *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.* In such a prayer, may every dying believer well desire to employ his parting breath, and, pouring forth his soul into the bosom of his Saviour, cry, Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

P S A L. LXXIII.

Title. מִזְמוֹר לְאַשָׁף *mizmor leasaph.*] The Psalmist here considers that great question, Why wicked men are permitted to prosper, and good men to be miserable and afflicted; and, to put the case home, he describes these wicked men as profligate to the last degree; highly impious towards God, and injurious to men; and yet suffered to live in ease and affluence, and at last to enjoy a death without any great pain. *There are no bands in their death,* ver. 4. *They have no pains when they die,* says Le Clerc. This had almost tempted him, he says, to doubt the providence of God; but then he was soon cured of the temptation, when he reflected on the miracles that God had wrought for his people, which left no room to question a providence. See on ver. 15. Still he was under some perplexity while he looked no further than the visible appearances of things; till he entered the sanctuary of God; then understood be the end of these men: their future wretched state in another world. See on ver. 17. In consequence of which he expresses his firm hope and trust in God: Assured

6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.

9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

10 Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.

11 And they say, How doth God know?

and is their knowledge in the Most High?

12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God:

of a future state of rewards and punishments, his heart was so perfectly and entirely at rest, that he seems to wonder how he could be so weak as to fall into doubts and perplexities about this matter. See ver. 21, 22, and Peters on Job.

Ver. 2. *My feet were almost gone*] By these figurative expressions the Psalmist means, that he began to stagger in his faith, and was in danger of falling into a disbelief of God's providence. The *foolish* and *wicked* are used in the next verse as synonymous terms; because wickedness argues a manifest defect in understanding. Mudge renders the word *foolish*, by *men of no principle*.

Ver. 6. *Therefore pride compasseth them, &c.*] That is, *They are bolden*, as the other translation has it, or *they are wholly possessed with pride*: in like manner, as their necks are encompassed with a golden chain; which used to be worn by way of ornament. See Cantic. iv. 9. Castalio renders the next clause, *They are clothed with the garment of violence*; i. e. "They maintain their pompous greatness by acts of violence." These are what so magnificently clothes them.

Ver. 8. *They are corrupt, &c.*] *They mock, and speak maliciously of oppression: they speak from on high. From on high*, signifies, from the superior station to which they are advanced: or, from the bench of justice. See Pf. xciv. 10.

Ver. 9. *They set their mouth against the heavens*] i. e. *They blaspheme the God of heaven; and their tongue walketh, &c.* i. e. is let loose to abuse and calumniate whomsoever they please.

Ver. 10. *Therefore his people return hither*] "Therefore God's people falleth off to them, and from thence they reap no small advantage." Green Mudge renders it, *Therefore, let his people come before them, and waters in full measure would be wrung out from them*. This seems, says he, to continue the description of their haughtiness and oppression. "Should God's people (for he is mentioned in the next verse) come before them, they would squeeze them to the uttermost: they would wring out all the juice in their bodies." *Waters in full measure*, seems to be proverbial. Houbigant and Fenwick give different versions from any of these. Houbigant reads, *Therefore bread fills them to the full, and water is drank by them in a flowing cup*. Fenwick reads the passage in a parenthesis.

" (For this his people broken-hearted fit,
" And tears in great abundance shed.)"

The reader must judge for himself.

Ver. 15. *If I say, I will speak thus, &c.*] *Reckon or reason thus*:—*I should offend against the generation of thy children*; i. e. "I should give the lie to the history of our forefathers." See Peters, and the first note. Others, by the *generation of God's children*, understand all true believers: those who have undertaken the service of God, and entered into covenant with him: part of which covenant and profession is, to believe in God's Providence: which therefore to deny, question, or doubt of, is to *break* the covenant, to *prevaricate*, to deal perfidiously; according to the meaning of the original word **בגד** *bagad*, rendered *offend*.

Ver. 17. *Then understood I their end*] This certainly cannot mean their destruction by death; for he had before expressly taken notice of their felicity or ease in this respect. Nor is it easy to say how the sanctuary, or any thing there, could inform him of the manner of the death of wicked men. This must be learned from observation. Nor can what follows in the next verse be understood consistently with the rest of the psalm, of a temporal destruction, but of their future wretched state in another world; which is often represented in Scripture by death and destruction; and so, indeed, the following verses explain it. *How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment!* ver. 19. i. e. The moment that they pass from this life to another, *they are utterly consumed with terrors*. Ver. 20. *As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, in arousing or awakening them, for so it should be rendered, Thou wilt despise or debase their image*. This, obscurely as it is expressed, evidently points at something after death; for it is then alone that the finally impenitent can be thoroughly awakened to see their misery. If, therefore, the word rendered *their image*, means the **εἰδωλον**, as Homer calls it, *the separated soul*; methinks there is an exquisite propriety in the word here used, and rendered *despise* or *debase*: "Thou shalt debase, spurn, and render contemptible, the separate spirits of those haughty wretches, whose pride had raised them in their own conceit above all other men, and even led them to despise their Maker and his laws. Their condition in the region of departed souls shall be as low and despicable,"

then understood I their end.

18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction.

19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

20 As a dream when one awaketh; so, O LORD, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.

21 Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.

22 So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.

23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee:

thou hast holden me by my right hand.

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.

26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.

“cable, as here it was in appearance high and happy.” The Chaldee paraphrast understands the passage of the day of judgment; and Dr. Hammond compares it with that of Dan. xii. 2. that *some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt*. See Peters, and more on the 24th verse.

Ver. 21, 22. *Thus my heart was grieved] I was disturbed with envy and indignation at the prosperity of the wicked*. The word rendered *a beast*, in the next verse, is a term aptly applied in Scripture to one who is wholly taken up with the things before him, and who has no sense of, or regard to things, future and invisible. See Psal. xcii. 6.

Ver. 24. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, &c.]* See Pl. xlix. 15. That the future wretched state of wicked men is understood in the preceding verses, seems further evident, from its being opposed to the happy state of the righteous in this verse; where the very term *glory* is used, whereby the happiness of heaven is described in the New Testament. The two next verses are no less remarkable; for no Christian could express his hope of being for ever with God in more apt words. It follows, ver. 27. *They that forsake thee shall perish*. What can be meant by this, but the future perdition of wicked men? For, do they *perish*? i. e. Are they certainly punished here? Are they so universally? if not, How is it possible to understand these words of any thing temporal? or how, in short, can this knot be untied, this difficulty solved, which has so often perplexed good men, but by the doctrine of future rewards and punishments? This was then that doctrine of the sanctuary, which set the Psalmist's heart at rest. If it be still asked, What was there in the sanctuary to quiet and compose the Psalmist's doubts, or to confirm him in the belief of another life? The answer is easy; that his entering the sanctuary of God would naturally turn his thoughts towards heaven, the habitation of God and his holy angels; of which the tabernacle and temple were a sort of standing symbol or memorial. The figures of the cherubim, which were not only placed in the Holy of Holies, but sculptured on the walls of the temple round about, have been generally believed, both by Jews and

Christians, except a few moderns perhaps, to represent the hosts of angels that attend upon the divine Majesty as his ministers to do his pleasure; and there is so near an affinity between the doctrine of angels and that of the human soul subsisting after death, that they who believed the one, could scarcely be ignorant of, or disbelieve, the other. There is, I think, a promise made to Joshua the high-priest, Zech. iii. 7. that if he discharged his office with fidelity, God would hereafter give him a place in heaven among the blessed angels his attendants. *I will give thee places to walk among them that stand by; or among these ministering angels*. See Peters, p. 292.

Ver. 28. *That I may declare all thy works]* The end breaks off a little abruptly, for want of what the LXX read, *in the gates of the daughters of Zion*.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The prosperity of the wicked has been a common temptation to the saints of God. The Psalmist was staggered at it, and musing, on the mysterious providence, he breaks forth, *Truly, or notwithstanding, God is good to Israel, even to them that are of a clean heart*: this he is assured of amidst all his doubts and perplexities, and, holding fast this principle, rides out the storm. *Note*: There are some first principles clear as the sun; to them we must recur under all our difficulties.

2dly, He was strongly tempted, but as strongly supported, and enabled at last to prevail.

1. He kept his thoughts to himself while he ruminated on the subject, lest he should offend God's people; and, though he saw the rash suggestion of his spirit, he would not speak unadvisedly with his lips. *If I say, I will speak thus, behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children*; and that he was shocked to think of, and carefully avoided. *Note*: (1.) When evil thoughts arise, our labour must be to suppress them; when once uttered, their mischief may be endless and irreparable. (2.) There are a people in the world dear to God as children, and who love him as their father, whom we must be careful never to offend, to grieve, or discourage. (3.) It would be the greatest reproach on God's service, and most effectually tend to weaken the

P S A L. LXXIV.

The prophet complaineth of the desolation of the sanctuary: he moveth God to help, in consideration of his power, of his reproachful enemies, of his children, and of his covenant.

Maschil of Afaph.

O GOD, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?

2 Remember thy congregation, *which* thou

hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, *which* thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; *even* all *that* the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.

4 Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs.

hands of his people, to misrepresent his good ways, as unprofitable and vain. (4.) They who do so, shew that they have never truly served God; since the experience of every faithful soul proves his service to be the supreme felicity.

2. Though by the light of reason he could not reconcile this difficulty, yet when he went into the sanctuary, sought God by prayer, and communed with his word and ministers, then the mystery was unfolded; he saw the prosperity of sinners no longer to be envied, when they were fattening only as an ox for the slaughter. Their joy had no stability, was precarious and momentary; their destruction inevitable, sudden, and terrible. Like a dream of the night, when God awakes to judgment, their prosperity vanishes, and is exchanged for everlasting shame and contempt. *Note;* We must form our judgment of men and things, not by appearances, but by the word of God; and when we there see the end of prosperous iniquity in everlasting burnings, and of suffering piety in eternal glory, we shall no longer hesitate about our choice.

3dly, The temptations of the faithful serve to brighten their graces, and end in their greater establishment. Such good the Psalmist found.

1. He owns his deep obligations to the grace of God. *Nevertheless, I am continually with thee,* the object of God's tender regard, and cleaving to God amidst all his temptations; *thou hast holden me by my right hand,* as a tender parent who supports his falling child. *Note;* We are weak as helpless infancy, and stand wholly indebted to the everlasting arms which are under us, for our preservation. And the more we are convinced of this, the more shall we be engaged to love God.

2. He expresses his confidence of God's continual guidance and support. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,* his revealed word, and the teachings of his holy Spirit, and *afterwards receive me to glory,* when, every trial passed, and death the last overcome, thou wilt bring me to the consummation of bliss in thy eternal kingdom. *Note;* (1.) God's counsel in his word infallibly conducts to his glory those who follow it. (2.) If there be a sure inheritance for the faithful in eternal glory, the godly little need envy sinners any thing that they possess above them here below.

3. His soul rises up in fervent aspirations after God, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* A covenant God is the sole object of the believer's worship and confidence, from whom alone he expects his felicity, and in the enjoyment of whom the eternal happiness of the faithful consists. He hopes to be happy in heaven, because God is there; and *there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee;* all that earth affords, health, wealth, friends, family, honour, &c. are

nothing, compared with a sense of God's love, and the enjoyment of communion with him. All without him cannot satisfy; whilst in the want of all, he can satisfy our souls, and be to us a better portion than ten thousand worlds. *Note;* (1.) The more we see of God's excellence and all-sufficiency, the less we shall regard every thing besides. (2.) What cause have we to lament the coldness of our hearts, which so little correspond with the Psalmist's fervent desires?

4. In every distress he rests his soul upon this Almighty God, his all-sufficient portion. *My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength, or rock of my heart,* to support me in every distress, and *my portion for ever;* when the body is laid in the dust and forgotten, God will be still the same to the faithful soul, its complete and eternal portion. *Note;* (1.) We must expect the hour when this feeble flesh shall fail, and sickness, or age, bring us to the grave. (2.) Death is terrible to nature; and our heart, as well as flesh, will fail, us in that trying season, unless God be our strength, and faith in his power and grace remove the sting of death. (3.) They who have made God their rock in time, will find him their portion in eternity.

5. Miserable will be the end of the ungodly. *For, lo, they that are far from thee,* who depart from God in heart and conduct, and live estranged from his love, worship, and service, *shall perish eternally.* *Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee,* that follow other gods, or, idolatrously attached to the creature, love and serve it more than their Creator; all such sinners have perished, and all such will perish to the end of time, who thus apostatize from God.

6. He declares his fixed purpose of cleaving to God. *But it is good for me to draw near to God* in prayer, and all those means of grace whereby communion with God is maintained, and which they, who have their souls truly attached to him, find most profitable and delightful. *I have put my trust in the Lord God,* who will never disappoint the expectations of his faithful people; *that I may declare all thy works of providence and grace,* wherein his faithfulness and mercy appear, and for which we owe everlasting praise. *Note;* (1.) They who know the comfort of communion with God, can say by experience, it is *good to draw near* to him. (2.) None ever trusted in him, and were confounded. (3.) The more we are enabled to trust him, the more shall we see cause to praise him.

P S A L. LXXIV.

Title. מַשְׁכִּיל לְאַפַּחַם *maschil leafaph.*] This psalm seems to have been composed just upon the destruction

5 *A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.*

6 But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.

7 They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by *casting down* the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground.

8 They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

9 We see not our signs: *there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.*

10 O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?

11 Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck *it* out of thy bosom.

12 For God *is* my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.

14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him *to be* meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

15 Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers.

16 The day *is* thine, the night also *is* thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.

17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.

tion of Jerusalem and the temple by the Chaldeans. The author, after lamenting the calamities of his country, and the insults of his enemies, calls to remembrance the glorious exploits which God had performed in ancient days for his people, and prays him to exert himself afresh in their cause, which by the blasphemous defiance of the enemy was now become his own. It could not certainly have been composed by the same Asaph who wrote the foregoing psalm; (See 2 Chron. xxix. 30.) but, as Bishop Patrick thinks, by some person of his posterity, who, during the captivity, was suffered to remain at Jerusalem with the Chaldeans.

Ver. 2. *Remember thy congregation*] i. e. The Israelites who are thy church, and whom, at the expence of so many miracles, thou didst make thy peculiar people. *The rod*, in the next clause, is put for the land itself, which was the portion of God's peculiar inheritance, the Israelites; and which, as was the custom, was measured out to them by rods or lines. See Ps. xvi. 6.

Ver. 3. *Lift up thy feet*, &c.] *Lift up thy feet because of perpetual desolations.* The phrase *lift up thy feet*, signifies no more than *come*, or *return*. God had deserted his sanctuary, and the *Shechinah* had gone up from between the cherubims. See Ezek. x. 4. In consequence of which, the heathen people had invaded that holy place, and laid it waste. *The perpetual desolations*, signify those ruins of the city and country which had lasted so very long.

Ver. 4. *Thine enemies roar*, &c.] i. e. "They triumph in those places where thy people formerly met to worship thee." See ver. 7. *For signs*, means, "As trophies, in token of their conquest over us."

Ver. 5, 6. *A man was famous*, &c.] *They shew themselves as one lifts up axes on high, in the thicket of the trees.* Ver. 6. *But now*, &c. Houbigant renders it in the perfect tense; and, instead of the *carved work thereof*, reads, *thy gates*. *But now they have broken down thy gates.*

Ver. 9. *We see not our signs*] *Any token of thy divine presence amongst us.* Bishop Patrick concludes from the next clause, that this psalm was composed towards the end of

the captivity, because the writer complains here that *there was no prophet left* (as there was at the beginning of it, particularly Jeremiah,) to tell the Jews how long it would last.

Ver. 11. *Why withdrawest thou thy hand*] Their upper garments having no sleeves, the arms were wrapped up and covered under them; and consequently, when the hand was made use of, it must have been disengaged from the garment, and made bare. The phrase, *why withdrawest thou thy hand?* must therefore imply inactivity, and that God suspended the exercise of his power, and was an inactive spectator of the miseries of his people. In the next verses the Psalmist proceeds to encourage himself in the hopes of deliverance from God, by a review of the mighty works which he had heretofore wrought for his people. See Taylor's Hebrew Concordance.

Ver. 13, 14. *Dragons—leviathan*] The Hebrew words may mean much the same; only the latter seems to express a more distinguished kind of crocodile. It is under this character that the Egyptians and their king are designed, who were destroyed in the Red Sea, and their bodies thrown out for a prey to the desert nations, who lived on fish, and what the sea yielded. See Mudge and Ezek. xxix. 1. 4. The Targum has it, *Thou crushedst the heads of the dragons, and drownedst the Egyptians in the sea; thou brakest the heads of the strong ones of Pharaoh.* Some commentators suppose, that *the people inhabiting the wilderness* must mean figuratively the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the land; so that the meaning of this is just as if it had been said that Goliath's curse had been fulfilled upon them; *I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.* 1 Sam. xvii. 44. And it appears from Homer's and other poets' use of the phrase, that it was proverbial.

Ver. 15. *Mighty rivers*] *Perpetual springs.* Schultens.

Ver. 16. *The light*] *The luminary, or receptacle of light,* according to the original. The word *אור* *meor* is collective, and means all the luminaries, with their chief the sun. The Psalmist here proceeds to shew, that God's power is manifested

18 Remember this, *that* the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and *that* the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.

19 O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of *the wicked*: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.

20 Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.

21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.

22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.

23 Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.

manifested not only by the foregoing instances of it in particular, but also by the works of creation in general.

Ver. 19. O deliver not the soul, &c.] Do not give up thy turtle to the ravenous beast; Mudge. The Hebrew is literally, the beast of appetite, or the ravenous beast. We see in the next verse, that all the caves and coverts of the country were filled with parties, who skulked there to cut off straggling Jews: so that the covenant of God, whereby he obliged himself to perpetuate the seed of Abraham, was seemingly in danger of being defeated. It was natural therefore to express the condition of that people and their enemies, by the poor solitary helpless turtle, and the beast of prey.

Ver. 20. For the dark places, &c.] For the dark places of the land are full of lodgments of treachery; Mudge. i. e. "This land is now so far from being inhabited by thy people, that every dark corner of it is a den of thieves and murderers."

REFLECTIONS.—1st, A day of trouble should be a day of prayer. Whence can we hope for relief, but by pouring our complaints into the bosom of our compassionate God? The Psalmist here,

1. Humbly expostulates with God on the calamities of the people of Israel. O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever; for so long their sufferings were continued, that they began to fear they would never end. *Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?* so fierce his wrath appeared against them, though *the sheep of his pasture*, whom once he had fed with a shepherd's care; and though foolishly they had strayed from him, yet cannot the Psalmist quit his hope, that Jehovah would still regard them in this endeared relation, and stay the furiousness of his displeasure.

2. He pleads for a gracious remembrance from God. *Remember thy congregation*, chosen by him to be a peculiar people, *which thou hast purchased of old*, by the blood of the Lamb, then slain in effect by virtue of the promise; *the rod of thine inheritance*, not only by the redemption of his Son, but by many temporal deliverances wrought for them, especially from Egypt; *this mount Zion wherein thou hast dwelt*, and from whence he intreats God would not remove his residence. And this is applicable to the faithful in every age, redeemed by Jesus from sin, death, and hell, in the midst of whom, as his living temple, God is pleased to dwell, and who may in every time of trouble expect a gracious remembrance from him.

2dly, We have two considerations suggested for quieting the people of God under their troubles.

1. God is Israel's king, working wonders for their salvation. *God is my king of old*, protecting and preserving his people from their foes, *working salvation in the midst of the earth*; that spiritual and eternal salvation which all the faithful should partake of through Jesus Christ; or as interposing in a miraculous manner, in delivering the Jewish people, dividing the Red Sea for their passage, and destroying Pharaoh and his captains in the waters. *Note; (1.) The head of the old dragon is bruised by our divine Lord, and we may triumph over him as a vanquished foe. (2.) The same rock which followed Israel follows us, for that rock was Christ; and from the waters of his grace and consolations, believers are daily comforted and strengthened in their journey through this wilderness. (3.) If we see not these outward miracles, as great spiritual wonders are still wrought for the faithful, who, through difficulties to human apprehension insurmountable, are led safely to their heavenly Canaan.*

2. He is the God of nature. *The day is thine, the night also is thine*; he opens the eye-lids of the morning, and draws the curtains of the evening; and in regular succession the luminaries of heaven move in their orbits. *Thou hast set all the borders of the earth*: fixing the bounds of nations and empires: *thou hast made summer and winter*: and surely he who made all these, hath power to save his faithful people: While they see these changes in the world, they must not despair; their night of adversity he can dispel with the sunshine of prosperity, and change their dreary winter, of sorrows and desolation, into the summer of abundance and joy.

3dly, Conscious that their help cometh only from the Lord, the Psalmist calls upon Jehovah to *arise* and *plead*, not merely on their behalf, but *thine own cause*, his glory being intimately connected with the salvation of the faithful.

1. God was reproached and blasphemed daily by their enemies, as if he was unable to deliver them, or unfaithful to his promises, and had disappointed their hopes: the success of Israel's enemies intoxicated them, and daily they increased their proud boastings. This their foolishness and wickedness, the Psalmist hopes God will remember, and not forget, for the sake of his own glory, so dishonoured thereby. *Note; (1.) Success often makes sinners more daring, and ripens them for ruin. (2.) The enemies of God's people triumph often, as if the day was their own; but the prosperity of fools destroys them. (3.) Ungodly sinners*

P S A L. LXXV.

The prophet praiseth God: he promiseth to judge uprightly: he rebuketh the proud by the consideration of God's providence: he praiseth God, and promiseth to execute justice.

To the chief musician, Al-taschith, A Psalm or Song of Afaph.

UNTO thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.

2 When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.

3 The earth and all the inhabitants there-

of are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.

4 I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:

5 Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.

6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

8 For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

sinners think they are very wise, when they turn things sacred into ridicule; but, to their confusion, they will be proved in the end as foolish as they are wicked. (4.) God needs no memorial, he sees and notes the ways of men; but it is right that we should plead thus, as a testimony of our regard for the glory of God, and of our confidence that he will appear to vindicate it.

2. His people were oppressed and persecuted: they are called *God's turtle-dove*, so mournful, harmless, pure, affectionate, constant; *his poor*, humble and lowly in spirit, such as God promises to regard; therefore the Psalmist prays, *O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked, who waited but for permission to destroy them; forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever; though for a time they had seemed forsaken, he hopes God will at last remember them in mercy. Have respect unto the covenant, made in Christ to all the faithful: for the dark places of the earth, and such were the mansions of their captivity, are full of the habitations of cruelty, which rendered their state more wretched and pitiable, being so cruelly treated by their enemies. O let not the oppressed return ashamed; as disappointed of their requests at a throne of grace: let the poor and needy praise thy name; give them occasion to do so, for the disappointment of their enemies, and their own salvation; and give them a heart to do so, that while the wicked blaspheme, they may adore thee.*

P S A L. LXXV.

Title. למנצחאל תשחת מזמור ל-אסף שיר. *lammatschach al taschith mizmor leasaph shiir.*] This psalm is thought, by Bishop Patrick and others, to have been composed on account of the great deliverance of Jerusalem from the numerous and formidable army of Sennacherib, in the time of Hezekiah. The Syriac title asserts, that it treats of Christ and the future judgment. Hence, Symmachus calls this psalm, "A triumphal Song concerning Immortality;" which Theodoret supports, by observing, that it contains a prediction of the punishment of the wicked, and the reward of the good.

Ver. 2. When I shall receive, &c.] When I find the appointed time, I execute righteous judgment; Mudge: who observes, that this and the following verse contain the words of God, in answer to the first verse: that now the time was come

for him to do justice, and therefore the earth melted before him. This it might well do, as he had first set up the pillars of it; for so the last clause of the third verse should be rendered. It stood firmly only by his order, and therefore must be dissolved whenever he pleases.

Ver. 4. I said unto the fools, &c.] I gave notice to wild impious fools, behave not impiously. These, to the ninth verse, are the author's words, in consequence of God's declaration; in which he gives fair notice to impious persons to beware of insolence, and not to attribute success to random causes, or forces coming from this or that quarter, but to God; who, in the proper time, will do justice to all the world, out of that cup which he held in his hand; and they might depend upon it, that he would oblige the wicked to drink the very dregs of it. Mudge.

Ver. 6. For promotion, &c.] For exaltation is not from the east nor west, nor from the wilderness; ver. 7. but God is judge: he humbleth one, and exalteth another. Mudge. Dr. Delaney thinks, that this refers to the situation of the tabernacle in the marches of the Israelites; when three of the tribes were to the east of it, three to the west, three to the north, and three to the south. And he apprehends that the prophet's design is, to inform them, that their exaltation proceeded neither from the people, nor from their own merits, but from God, the center and source of power; and therefore they should be humbled in his presence. Houbigant, after the Syriac, gives the passage a very different turn, and, supposing it addressed to the impious men spoken of above, he renders it, *For neither will there be any means of escape from the west, or the desert of mountains.* See his note.

Ver. 8. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red] And the wine is in a ferment. Hiller, 328. *Is unmixed: Green; who renders the next clause, He filleth it up to the brim, and poureth out of the same.* It is not improbable, that the wine here mentioned may allude to the stupifying and intoxicating liquor, which was given to criminals before their execution, either to hasten their death, or to lessen their sense of the pains they were to suffer; for it was a mixture of poisonous and stupifying herbs infused in wine. See Matth. xxvii. 34.; Pl. lx. 3. If we suppose some such intoxicating wine to have been in use

9 But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; *but* the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

P S A L. LXXVI.

A declaration of God's majesty in the church. An exhortation to serve him reverently.

To the chief musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

IN Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.

2 In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his

dwelling-place in Zion.

3 There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

4 Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.

5 The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.

6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.

7 Thou, *even* thou art to be feared: and who may stand in thy fight when once thou art angry?

use at the time this psalm was written, it will account for the mixture here spoken of; a circumstance otherwise difficult to explain.

Ver. 9. But I will declare for ever] But as for me, I will exult for ever. See Bishop Hare and Mudge. As for his part, the author declares he would always exult, and celebrate the glory of the God of Jacob; whose minister he should be, to humble the wicked, and to exalt the righteous. This shews the author of the psalm either to have been the prince, or some one in his person.

REFLECTIONS. The psalm opens,

1. With repeated and fervent thanksgivings for God's great mercies received; and may be considered as the language of the church adoring God for the gift of his Son, who, in his incarnation, was brought near unto us, and whose miracles, and wondrous works of redemption, declared his power and grace. *Note;* (1.) Praise is ever our bounden duty on every review of God's mercies towards us. (2.) Every faithful believer experiences wondrous instances of God's nearness to help him out of dangers, from which he could not escape, and to bring him to the enjoyment of mercies above his expectations.

2. The Psalmist promises, that his administration should be just and upright. And, when the great congregation of God's people shall be gathered unto Christ in the day of his appearing and glory, then shall righteous judgment proceed against the ungodly. *Note;* (1.) Magistrates are accountable to God, from whom they receive their authority, and their decisions must be without partiality. (2.) They who have the honour of office, must remember the conscientious discharge of the burden thereto annexed.

3. He undertakes to support and restore, through the divine blessing, the weak and distracted state of Israel. *Note;* (1.) Disunion and faction hasten a kingdom to destruction. (2.) One true patriot has often saved a nation. But this more emphatically appertains to Christ, who, when the world, with all its inhabitants, by sin was dissolved, and ready to be swallowed up in misery, bore up the pillars of it, and by his redemption renewed the face of the earth.

4. He rebukes the folly as well as wickedness of those who opposed his government. Though they exerted all their power against him, with a stiff neck refused to bend,

and proudly spoke against his administration, it was all in vain; and therefore he admonishes them to submit, lest they should feel the weight of his arm. Many are the enemies from earth and hell that oppose the kingdom of Jesus; but it shall rise superior to all opposition; the anti-christian horns shall be broken; and the sinners, who have spoken hard speeches against him, be silenced in eternal destruction. *Note;* It is folly to oppose where resistance is vain, and madness where ruin must be the consequence; yet thus foolishly and madly do sinners plunge their souls into eternal perdition, and will not have this Jesus to reign over them.

P S A L. LXXVI.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ עַל יְרוּחוֹ *lamnatseach al ieduthun.]* If we give credit to the Septuagint version, this psalm was composed upon the same occasion as the former. Dr. Delaney thinks it was written upon another occasion; but he assigns no reason. I think it evident to a demonstration, says he, that the 76th psalm was written upon David's victory over the Philistines in the valley of Rephaim, though not by David. See Life of David, b. ii. c. 7.

Ver. 3. There brake he the arrows, &c.] The fiery arrows of the bow, &c. That is, there, before the walls of Jerusalem, he overthrew the enemy, and destroyed all their military preparations. See 2 Kings, xix. 32.

Ver. 4. Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey] The meaning of this verse is, that Jehovah, who sendeth help to his people from Mount Zion, is superior to the gods of the mountains, under whose protection the despoilers of the earth make their depredations. From the powerful assistance which Jehovah afforded his people from Mount Zion, the Assyrians called him, *the God of the hills*, and not of the vallies: see 1 Kings, xx. 23. Green. Houbigant renders it, *thou art more radiant than light; thou art higher than the eternal mountains*; and Mudge, *Thou shonest forth glorious from the mountains of prey*. It seems very doubtful what these *mountains of prey* were. See Pl. xxix. 9. The common sense given to the passage is, "Thou, O Sion, art far more impregnable, through the defence of God, than the mountains upon which the Assyrians had fortified themselves, and from which their soldiers made frequent excursions to ravage the country." *Slept their sleep*, in the next verse, means, so as never to awake again: (see

8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared and was still.

9 When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.

12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.

P S A L. LXXVII.

The Psalmist sheweth what fierce combat he had with diffidence; and the victory which he had by the consideration of God's great and gracious works.

To the chief musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph.

I CRIED unto God with my voice, *even* unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

2 In the day of my trouble I sought the LORD: my fore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

3 I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

(see 2 Kings, xx. 21.) and found their hands, or arms, signifies, are enabled to strike a stroke.

Ver. 10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, &c.] This alludes to the insolent menaces of the Assyrians, and their disgraceful defeat. It seems probable from the two foregoing verses, that mighty thunderings preceded the destruction of the Assyrians; When God arose to judgment, i. e. sent forth his anger to destroy them.

Ver. 12. He shall cut off, &c.] Him that cutteth off, or bringeth down, &c. The spirit signifies the pride and elation of the mind; such as was that of the king of Assyria, before he was forced to return with shame of face to his own land.

REFLECTIONS.—The church of God is often made to sing her triumphant songs, even here below.

1. God is here represented as eminently appearing for her. In Judah is God known; there he had made the most glorious revelation of himself, and of his will: his name is great in Israel, exalted and praised by his people, and magnified in the wonders he had wrought on their behalf. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion; favoured with his immediate presence, visible in the Shecinah of glory. And this may refer to the incarnation of the Son of God, made known in Judah by the preaching of the Baptist, as Israel's exalted Saviour, who pitched his tabernacle among men, appeared in the flesh at Jerusalem; and in his church, the spiritual Zion, continues to take up his abode.

2. A glorious victory is obtained, whether by David, by Jehoshaphat, by Hezekiah, or, by the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom emphatically it may be applied, over the powers of sin, Satan, death, and hell. The enemies are represented as stout hearted, as men of might, as completely armed. But there is no contending against God; the arrows are broken, the shield, the sword, and the battle: unable to defend themselves, the mighty are fallen with their chariots and horses; they sleep the sleep of death, and the weak take the spoil. Thus hath our Redeemer spoiled principalities and powers; and, following him, the weakest believer seizes the prey, and triumphs over vanquished foes; for all the enemies of Christ's church and people, however many or mighty, shall be rooted out at the last.

3. The whole is ascribed to God alone, his is the work,
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to him must be the praise. Not by our might or power, but at thy rebuke, O God, they are cast down. Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey; tyrannical kings, and all the persecuting powers, are nothing in the hands of his omnipotence; the higher they are exalted, the more will he be glorified in their abasement, for every mountain shall be brought low. Note; In all the dangers to which God's people are exposed, they must look to the glorious power of God, engaged for them, and not be afraid.

P S A L. LXXVII.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ עַל יְדוּתוֹן לְאַסָּף מִזְמוֹר lamnatseach al ieduthun leasaph mizmor.] Whoever was the author of this psalm, he was manifestly under a great dejection of mind when he penned it. He speaks of himself as deserted of God, and given up to be a prey to the sorrows of his own disturbed and tormented heart, see ver. 2, 3. What the particular grief was which gave rise to this mournful complaint, does not appear; but, whatever it was, the sting of it lay in this, that the Psalmist apprehended himself to be forsaken of God, and, without doubt, this is of all afflictions the most insupportable; a grief which no medicine can reach, which all the powers of reason cannot assist: for the soul refuses to be comforted: that the Psalmist speaks of the sorrows of a religious well-disposed heart, is manifest from the description that he gives of his conduct and behaviour under his distress. He was sorely troubled; but in the day of his trouble he sought the Lord. He was afflicted, but in his affliction he remembered God, ver. 3. Whatever doubts he entertained as to his own condition, and the favour of God towards him, yet of the being, the power, and wisdom of God, he never doubted: this faith, which in his utmost extremity he held fast, proved to be his sheet-anchor, and saved him from the shipwreck, which the storms and tempests raised in his own breast seemed to threaten. See Bishop Sherlock's Discourses, vol. ii. p. 229. and the note on the last verse.

Ver. 1. I cried, &c.] My voice was unto God, and I cried: my voice was unto God, &c.

Ver. 2. My fore ran in the night, &c.] My hand was spread, or stretched out in the night, and remitted not. Houbigant. Green renders it, In the night mine eye trickled down without ceasing.

4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking : I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

5 I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

6 I call to remembrance my song in the night : I commune with mine own heart : and my spirit made diligent search.

7 Will the LORD cast off for ever ? and will he be favourable no more ?

8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever ? doth his promise fail for evermore ?

9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ? Selah.

10 And I said, This is my infirmity : but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

11 I will remember the works of the LORD : surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

13 Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary : who is so great a god as our God !

14 Thou art the God that doest wonders : thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

15 Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee ; they were afraid : the depths also were troubled.

17 The clouds poured out water : the skies sent out a sound : thine arrows also went abroad.

18 The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven : the lightnings lightened the world : the earth trembled and shook.

19 Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Ver. 4. Thou holdest mine eyes, &c.] Thou didst keep the watches of mine eyes. I was troubled, and spake not.

Ver. 6. I call to remembrance my song] In the night I conversed with my heart, and my spirit made inquiry, saying, —Green.

Ver. 9. Hath God forgotten to be gracious] It is worth our while to observe the train of thoughts which this afflicted good man pursued, and what were the reflections in which he rested at last, as his best and only comfort and support. Whether the calamities which afflicted him were private to himself, or public to his people and country ; yet, as long as his thoughts dwelt on them, and led him into expostulations with God on the severity of his judgments, he found no ease or relief. A weak man cannot rightly judge of the actions even of a man wiser than himself, of whose views and designs he is not master : much less can any man judge of the ways of God, to whose counsels he is not admitted, and to whose secrets he is a stranger. The Psalmist complained heavily, ver. 9. But what did he get by his complaint ? Was he not forced immediately to confess the impropriety and folly of it ? I said, This is my infirmity. He said very rightly. In complaining, he followed the natural impressions of impatience : in acknowledging the folly of his complaint, he spoke the language not only of grace, but of sense and reason. But this good man, being well grounded in religion, was able so far to get the better of his doubts and fears, as to pass a right judgment in his own case, and to call to his assistance the proper reflections which the great works of Providence administered for the support and confirmation of his hope and confidence towards God. See ver. 11, 12. Here then was his comfort ; here the cure of all his grief. The scene around him was dark and gloomy ; but, dark as it was, it was

under the guidance and direction of the hand which had never failed the faithful, to deliver him out of all his troubles. See Sherlock as above. We may read the next verse, *And I said, this my affliction is a change of the right hand of the most High ;* [i. e.] from a charge of his conduct towards me : *his right hand ;* which had formerly wrought miracles for the deliverance of his people, though now it was turned against them.

Ver. 13. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary] O God, in holiness is thy way. Houbigant and Mudge. That is, “ Every thing which thou doest is conformable to thy sanctity, thy divinity : thy doing, thy conduct, is all “ divine, like thyself.”

Ver. 15. The sons of Jacob and Joseph] The people of the Jews are very properly stiled the sons of Joseph, as well as of Jacob. For as Jacob was, under God, the author of their being ; so was Joseph the preserver of it. The Chaldee paraphrast understood it thus ; rendering it, The sons which Jacob begat and Joseph nourished. The allusion in this and the following verses, is to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt ; and the plain inference is, that the same goodness and power may be expected to afford the same salvation in the present despondency and distress. See Bishop Lowth’s 26th Prelection for a critique upon this psalm.

Ver. 19. Thy way, &c.] Thy way was through the sea, and thy path through the great waters, though thy footsteps were not seen. “ God walked before his people through the “ sea, though he left no footsteps of himself behind “ him.”

Ver. 20. Thou leddest thy people like a flock] The complaints of good men in the Scriptures of the Old Testament are of two sorts : one regards the national calamities of the Jews, the other the sufferings of particular men. The

P S A L. LXXVIII.

An exhortation both to learn and to preach the law of God. The history of God's wrath against the incredulous and disobedient. The Israelites being rejected, God chose Judah, Zion, and David.

Maschil of Asaph.

GIVE ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

4 We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

5 For he established a testimony in Jacob,

The first (as well as the second) seems to have made a principal subject of the Psalmist's complaint in this psalm, as is probable from the conclusion, in which he reckons up the great things formerly done by God for the deliverance of his people; and concludes with one of the greatest: *Thou leddest thy people like a flock*, [through the Red Sea and through the wilderness, to the Promised Land,] *by the hand of Moses and Aaron*. His seeking comfort from a remembrance of God's great kindness to Israel, intimates that his sorrow was partly on account of their sufferings. See Bishop Sherlock as above.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Among the several conflicts that we may endure, are those inward temptations, trials, and bodily pains, with which our spirit may be afflicted; but let us not despair of comfort and relief, when it stands here on record, *I cried—and he gave ear unto me*. We have here,

1. The Psalmist's fervent and incessant prayers in *the day of his trouble*. *I cried with my voice*, earnest and aloud, *I sought the Lord*, with eager importunity; *my fore-ran in the night*, his heart bled with anguish; or, *my hand was stretched out in the night in prayer to God, and ceased not*. Note; (1.) In our distress we are especially called upon to fly to the compassionate bosom of our God, and pour out our complaints to him. (2.) If we would succeed, we must be both importunate and unwearied in our application.

2. His anguish was bitter, and he found no immediate relief. *My soul refused to be comforted*; laid hold on none of the promises; yea, when suggested to him, he thrust them from him as if they belonged not to him. *I remembered God*, and instead of finding relief from thence, *I was troubled*; his inexorable justice, and terrible majesty, fastened on his mind, and sunk him in deeper dejection. *I complained of my sufferings, and my spirit was overwhelmed*, as if my trials were too heavy to be borne. *Thou holdest mine eyes waking*; no balmy sleep brought for a time a truce of respite to his afflicted spirit: *I am so troubled, that I cannot speak*; his distress so unutterable, and his soul so dejected. Note; (1.) Under deep temptation we are apt to feed our own sorrows, and reject the consolations that God's word suggests to us. (2.) If we cannot speak but in groans, that is a language which God can understand, and will answer.

3. His melancholy fears occasioned great searchings of heart. *I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search* into the cause of my distress, and where it would end; and, between hope and fear, reason with my-

self, *Will the Lord cast off for ever? as he seems now to have forsaken me; and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy, so often shown to me, clean gone for ever? Is there no more mercy, not a drop yet in store for me? doth his promise fail for evermore? that no word of comfort shall again refresh my spirit? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? is it possible? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? so mused, so reasoned his dejected heart; and it speaks the strength of the temptation, which could cause him to question in the least degree truths so evident.*

4. One beam of hope at last brightens up the prospect: he had gone far in his fears, much farther than he had any real cause for; now he stops short, and chides his unbelieving heart. *I said, This is my infirmity*, my lot of affliction, under which I ought not to complain; or rather my weakness and sin, ever to entertain a doubt of the love and compassions of my God: *but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High*, that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, able to save to the uttermost, and therefore ever to be remembered and trusted. Note; (1.) We have already got, in a measure, out of our troubles when we begin to condemn our unbelief, and to cast our care upon God. (2.) There is no sin more besetting, none more to be lamented, than this dishonourable distrust of God's willingness to save.

2dly, Though we find not the immediate effect of the means of grace, we must not grow weary in using them: when we continue in God's way, we shall certainly succeed at last.

1. He continues to meditate on God's works and ways for the comfort of his soul. *I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old*; the great things he had done for his people of old, and the earnest of what he will do for them in future. *I will meditate also of all thy work*, of providence, redemption, and grace, for his own strength and consolation, and talk of *thy doings*, for the support and edification of others. Note; (1.) It becomes us often to remember the wonders of God's dispensations of providence and grace towards us, to awaken our greater thankfulness and gratitude. (2.) What he has done for our souls should be spoken of to his glory, and for the encouragement of others who may be in the like distress.

2. He acknowledges God's way to be holy. *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary, or in holiness*; all his dispensations altogether righteous, and they who wait upon him in his sanctuary will see the reasons of them opened and made known to them. Note; Though we may not always be able to solve particular difficulties in God's dealings

and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children :

6 That the generation to come might know *them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children :*

7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments :

8 And might not be as their fathers, a

stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation *that* set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.

9 The children of Ephraim *being* armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.

10 They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;

11 And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.

12 Marvellous things did he in the sight of

with men, yet this principle we must hold fast, that God is holy in all his ways, and just in all his works.

3. He magnifies God's power and grace, so eminently displayed in behalf of his people: *Thou art the God that dost wonders; thou hast declared thy strength among the people, in those stupendous miracles wrought for their redemption out of Egypt.* Afraid and troubled at the presence of God, the depths of the Red Sea were discovered, and its waters stood up as congealed into a wall of stone; the showering skies poured down torrents on the Egyptians, the thunders roared, the lightnings flashed, the earth quaked, and filled them with terror and dismay before the waters overwhelmed them; circumstances which, though not recorded in the Mosaic history, attended that fatal overthrow of Israel's enemies: whilst Israel, conducted by the way which God had opened through the sea, following his paths in these great waters, passed safely through; and then the sea returned to his strength, and no footsteps remained: thus, like a flock, God led them by the hand of Moses and Aaron, and brought them at last to the promised rest in Canaan. In all which he gloriously manifested his power and grace towards his people, and hath given his faithful followers everlasting cause to triumph in him: *Who is so great a god as our God? Note;* (1.) The redemption of Israel from Egypt, is typical of our redemption from the bondage of corruption. (2.) Like this passage through the sea, so are many of the works of God's grace and providence, incomprehensible to us; we can only stand on the shore and cry, *O the depth!* Rom. xi. 33. (3.) As God of old thus delivered his people, so will he ever lead, guide, and preserve his faithful ones; and they who trust in him shall not be disappointed of their hope.

P S A L. LXXVIII.

Title. מַשְׁכִּיל לְאַפֵּחַ *maskil leafaph*] This psalm contains a short account of the wonderful things which God had done for his people Israel, from the time of their coming out of Egypt to that of David: and, as it concludes there, Bishop Patrick is of opinion, that probably it was composed by that Asaph, who is called *the Singer*, and who lived in the time of David. But why might it not have been composed by David himself? From the beginning and the close, there seem to be better reasons to conclude it to be the composition of David, than of any other writer.

Ver. 2. I will open my mouth in a parable.] I will open my mouth in a wise moral: I will utter mysteries of ancient

times. The moral or design of this history is couched in the subsequent verses. See Mudge.

Ver. 3. Which we have heard and known.] What we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, ver. 4. we will not conceal from their sons of the next generation; relating the praises of the Lord. Mudge. This solemn charge and law, ver. 5. does not here mean the whole law of Moses, but that only whereby he enjoined them to deliver down the memory of God's miracles to all generations, *That they might trust in God, and not forget his wonders.*

Ver. 9. The children of Ephraim, &c.] The sons of Ephraim, who were armed with the bow, were put to flight in the day of battle; ver. 10. because he kept not, &c. Green: who renders the 12th and following verses in the pluperfect, like the 11th. *He had wrought marvellous things; he had divided the sea, &c.* The history here referred to seems to be that of the Israelites going up, contrary to God's command, to take possession of the land of Canaan, when they were smitten before their enemies. Deut. i. 42. The Ephraimites are here specified, probably, as being the most warlike tribe, and as having led on, perhaps, the rest of the tribes to the engagement. See Bishop Hare. Others think that the passage refers to a defeat of the Ephraimites, mentioned 1 Chron. vii. 21. Upon which Dr. Hammond observes from Kimchi thus: "This defeat of the Ephraimites was in the desert, and although the history be not mentioned in the Law, or Books of Moses, yet it is written in the Books of Chronicles; where, on occasion of Zabad the Ephraimite, and Shutela, &c. it is added, *whom the men of Gath, who were born in that land, slew; and Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.* From the circumstance of Ephraim's mourning it appears, that this happened before the Israelites entered into Canaan; and the manner of the relation shews that it was a considerable slaughter. Kimchi collects the greatness of it, by comparing the sum of the Ephraimites when they came out of Egypt, and were 40,500, with their number in the plains of Moab, which was no more than 32,500; 8000 short: whereas in that time (about 38 years) most of the other tribes were greatly increased. To this defeat and great slaughter of the Ephraimites by the men of Gath, an effect of their cowardice and unbelief, the Psalmist here," says the learned Doctor, "most probably refers."

Ver. 12. Field of Zaan.] Field, or territory of Tanis. Mudge. The land of Zaan, in Dr. Shaw's opinion, was only

their fathers, in the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan.

13 He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap.

14 In the day-time also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.

15 He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave *them* drink as out of the great depths.

16 He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

17 And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.

18 And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

19 Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

20 Behold he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

21 Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;

22 Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:

23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,

24 And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.

25 Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.

26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.

27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:

28 And he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.

29 So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;

30 They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat *was* yet in their mouths,

31 The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen *men* of Israel.

only another appellation for the land of *Egypt*, or the land of *Ham*, by taking, as usual in poetical composition, a part for the whole, or one of the most remarkable places of Egypt, such as Zoan might be in the time of the writer of this psalm, for the whole country. See Travels, p. 304.

Ver. 17. *And they sinned yet more*] *Yet they sinned still more.*

Ver. 18. *By asking meat for their lust*] See Hasselquist's Travels, p. 290.

Ver. 25. *Angels' food*] *Most excellent food—divine food.* Hiller. part ii. p. 165. *The bread of the mighty.* Houbigant. The Chaldee Paraphrase explains it by, *food which came from the habitation of angels*; so that this verse is almost synonymous with the last; where it is called *food*, or *corn from heaven*. Some of the Jewish rabbis tell us, that as the blessed in the future state, *children of the age to come*, as they call them, shall be fed or sustained by the light and splendor of the divine Majesty; so this manna was no other than *the divine light incorporate*. That it was no very solid or substantial food, we learn from the complaints of the grosser Israelites, who spoke of it with contempt: *Our soul isath this light food*; Numb. xxi. 5. But the lighter it was, the better probably it would fit them for contemplation, and so answer one chief end for which we may suppose it given to those whose hopes were terminated as to this world; and who therefore could not possibly be easy under these circumstances, had not their minds been raised, and turned towards those celestial regions from whence this manna came. But, whatever might be the

natural effect of this food, that it had a typical reference we are sure, from the words of Him who was the true *divine light incorporate*; and who calls himself that *bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*, John, vi. 33, &c. That the Israelites were not unacquainted with this typical reference, appears plain from the testimony of St. Paul, who says of their fathers, i. e. the Israelites in the wilderness, that they did *all eat the same spiritual meat*, &c. 1 Cor. x. 3. Here then the *manna*, for this no doubt is meant, is said to be to the Israelites a *spiritual meat*; but how was it possible it should be so, unless they were taught the spiritual meaning of it. That it had some reference to another life, seems not obscurely hinted by the great lawgiver himself, Deut. viii. 3. *He fed thee with manna*, &c. as if he had said, "You see from this plain instance, that life depends upon the will of God; who, as he gave it at the first, so he can preserve, restore, and perpetuate it at his pleasure. His word alone gives life; believe it and obey it therefore, live a life of faith, and you will live for ever." *Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.*—*The words that I speak unto you, says our Saviour, in the same divine phraseology, they are spirit, and they are life.* John, vi. 63. See Critical Dissert. on the Book of Job, p. 297.

Ver. 30. *They were not estranged from their lust*] *But before they were averse to what they had desired, and while their meat was still in their mouths, the wrath of God, &c.* Green: who, instead of the *fattest* of them, reads, the *wealthiest*. Mudje renders it, *They were not come to nauseate their desire:* *their*

32 For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.

33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.

34 When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God.

35 And they remembered that God *was* their rock, and the high God their redeemer.

36 Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.

37 For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.

38 But he, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and destroyed *them* not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

39 For he remembered that they *were* but

flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

40 How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, *and* grieve him in the desert!

41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

42 They remembered not his hand, *nor* the day when he delivered them from the enemy.

43 How he had wrought his *signs* in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:

44 And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.

45 He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.

46 He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust.

47 He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore-trees with frost.

their meat was yet in their mouths. Ver. 31. *When the wrath of God came upon them, and he slew them amidst their indulgences, and smote, &c.*

Ver. 32. *Believed not for, &c.] Believed not, &c.*

Ver. 34—38. *When he slew them, &c.] When he slew them, and they sought him, and returned, &c.—Ver. 35. And remembered, &c.—Ver. 36. Though they did flatter him—and lied, &c.—Ver. 37. And their heart, &c.—Ver. 38. Yet he, being full of compassion, &c.*

Ver. 41. *Yea, they turned back, &c.] And repeatedly put God to the proof, and set limits to the Holy One of Israel.* Mudge.

Ver. 47. *He destroyed their vines]* Egypt is not by any means a wine country, nor ever was; so far from it, that they were forced to use a sort of beer for common drink, and do so to this day, made of barley and some intoxicating drug; this country not producing, like other countries in the east, wine in such quantities, as to be tolerably proportionate to the wants of its inhabitants. We may therefore, perhaps, wonder that their *vines* should have been considered by the Psalmist as so important to be singled out, together with their *sycamores*, from their other trees, in his account of the destruction made among them by the hail; and may fancy that there must have been other trees of much more consequence to them, and in particular the *date*, which Maillet affirms to be the most esteemed at this time in Egypt on account of its profitableness. But it ought to be remembered, that many trees which are now found in Egypt, might not have been introduced in those times. Dr. Pococke supposes, that very few of the present Egyptian trees are natives; the *sycamore* and the *wine* might at that time therefore be very well thought the most valuable that they had. Their *sycamores* were undoubtedly very important to them, and their destruction a heavy loss. The ancient Egyptian coffins were made of this kind of wood, as are the modern barques according to Norden, of which they have such numbers on the Nile; and, consequently,

we may believe that their ancient barques, of multitudes of which they must always have stood in great need, on account of their country, were made of the same wood: But beside these uses, they produce a sort of fig upon which, Norden informs us, the people, for the greater part, live; thinking themselves well regaled when they have a piece of bread, a couple of sycamore figs, and a pitcher filled with water from the Nile. If their *vines* too were as useful then as they are now, the loss of them was very great. Their fruit serves for a considerable part of the entertainments that they give their friends: so Norden was treated by the Aga of Esflaen with coffee, and some bunches of grapes of an excellent taste, but small. If we may believe Maillet, they make still more of the leaves of their vines than they do of their fruit, using them when young prodigiously; for, minced-meat being one great part of their diet, they wrap it up in little parcels in vine-leaves, and, laying thus leaf upon leaf, season it after their mode, and so cook it, and make it a most exquisite sort of food, and one of the most delicious that comes upon their tables. But, beside these uses, they make some *wine*, which, though now it is made in very small quantities, as it is also in other Mahometan countries, yet was anciently much more plentiful, and even exported: for though, as was before observed, Egypt never produced wine in such quantities as to be tolerably proportionate to the number of its inhabitants, as in many other countries; yet they made so much, and that so delicious, as that it was carried to Rome, and so much drank there, as to be very well known in that seat of luxury; insomuch that Maillet, who never forgets any of the excellencies of this country, tells us, it was the third in esteem of their wines. It was made then, without doubt, and in *considerable quantities*, for the use of Pharaoh, and of his court, (Gen. xl. 9, &c.) who, probably, could procure no such wine from abroad, nor were acquainted with such liquors as the great now drink in Egypt; and confe-

48 He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.

49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels *among them*.

50 He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;

51 And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of *their* strength in the tabernacles of Ham:

52 But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

53 And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.

54 And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, *even to this mountain which* his right hand had purchased.

55 He cast out the heathen also before them,

and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

56 Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:

57 But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

59 When God heard *this*, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:

60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent *which* he placed among men;

61 And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.

62 He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.

63 The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.

consequently the loss of their *vines* must have been considerable. As to the *date-trees*, which are said to be the most important now of any to the Egyptians, and which are mentioned neither in this psalm nor in the 105th; may we not suppose that the storm of hail did not reach them? The trees, it is certain, which produce the best dates in Egypt, grow in the deserts, where it seems nothing else grows, and there they are in great numbers; and as hail-stones are not wont to extend very far, so there is no reason in the world to suppose that this storm reached to those deserts. It was sufficient if it fell with severity before the eyes of Pharaoh, and demolished the country which was cultivated, and particularly that part which was near to him; agreeable to which, we may observe, that the vineyards of Egypt were in the country of Fium, which, according to William of Tyre, is but one day's journey from Cairo, and consequently less from Memphis, the old royal city; Memphis and Fium lying both south-west of Cairo. As for the *sycamores*, Dr. Pococke tells us, they are planted near villages, especially about Cairo, and consequently not far from Memphis. Upon the whole, it is no wonder that we have no account of any damage done to their *daté-trees*, and that their *sycamores* and vines are distinguished from their other trees in the Mosaic history of this desolation. See *Observations*, p. 370.

Ver. 49. By sending evil angels among them] I join the latter end of this verse to the beginning of the next (says Mudge) in one sentence, which is a very noble one. *He nicely weighed or marked out a mission of evil angels, to be a path for his anger.* This refers to his slaying the first-born, which is described as performed by a destroying angel. *The path of his anger* is considered as a certain width or extent of destroying powers, which he exactly measured out. He renders the whole verse thus, *He measured out a mission*

of evil angels, to be a path for his anger; spared not their persons from death, and delivered over their cattle to the pestilence. Others by *evil angels*, understand the various plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians by the ministry of evil angels. Or, possibly, the plagues themselves may here be figuratively called *evil angels* or messengers, as they were the messengers of death and evil to them. See Exod. xii. 23.

Ver. 55. Divided them an inheritance by line] Or, *Divided them by line for an inheritance.*

Ver. 57. They were turned aside, &c.] This is explained by ver. 9. where the same word is used. The *bow* means a body of bowmen, who in the crisis of battle, like the Ephraimites above, either turn their bows against you, or run away. Mudge.

Ver. 60. So that he forsook the tabernacle] This relates to that part of the history of the Jews which is given 1 Sam. iv.; for, upon their sending for the ark of God from the tabernacle, in which it was deposited at Shiloh, God smote them, and suffered the Philistines to take the ark. And so true it is that he *forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh*, that he never returned to it again. See 1 Sam. vi. 1.; 2 Sam. vi.; 1 Kings, viii. 1. where the several removals of the ark are spoken of, which explain the remaining part of this psalm. Because God suffered the Philistines to take the ark, it is said, ver. 61. *That he delivered his strength and glory, i. e. the ark, into the enemies' hand;* and ver. 67. *That he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, &c.* for Shiloh was in the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph; and God did not suffer his ark to return thither, but to go to Kirjath-jearim, which was in the tribe of Benjamin; from thence to the house of Obedom, and so to *Sion*, in the tribe of Judah, as it follows, ver. 68.

Ver. 63. Their maidens were not given to marriage] *Were not*

64 Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.

65 Then the LORD awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.

66 And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.

67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:

68 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.

69 And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.

70 He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheep-folds:

71 From following the ewes great with

young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

P S A L. LXXIX.

The Psalmist complaineth of the desolation of Jerusalem: he prayeth for deliverance, and promiseth thankfulness.

A Psalm of Asaph.

GOD, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.

2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.

not celebrated or praised. Mudge. i.e. They lost all their charms and agreeableness; or, perhaps, were no longer serenaded and praised in poetry and music. The next verse refers to Hophni and Phinehas, and the widow of the latter, who, at her delivery, took no notice of the death of her husband.

Ver. 66. *He smote his enemies, &c.*] This refers to the emblems of the Philistines, which were remembered to their everlasting disgrace, by the golden ones which were kept ever after.

Ver. 69. *Like high palaces*] Like the mountains, the high places. This version is made probable by the next words, like the earth: standing upon the top of Zion and making the summit of it, the sanctuary had the air of a mountain; and the firmness of one now, being fixed there; for before it had been ambulatory. Mudge. See Pl. lxxviii. 18.

REFLECTIONS.—This psalm opens with a solemn call from the Lord Christ to attend the instructive truths here recorded: they are addressed to his people, the Jews in general, who are called his own, John, i. 11. and who were peculiarly bound to remember the wonders he had wrought on their behalf, to incline their ears to the words of his mouth; that everlasting gospel, which, in the law and the prophets, was declared to them, and in the fulness of time preached by himself among them.

1. The matter required attention. *I will open my mouth in a parable*; which was his usual method of teaching, Matth. xiii. 34, 35. *I will utter dark sayings of old*; truths which challenge the most serious regard, and which have antiquity to recommend them, the gospel being as old as the first man, though more clearly and plainly dispensed when Christ the Substance came, and the shadows fled away which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us; those holy ancestors, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who carefully transmitted the revelation which God had made to them, and the memory of his wonderful works, to their posterity: and we will not hide them from their children, the Jewish people, to whom Christ

and his apostles fully published the glorious gospel, showing to the generation to come, in a constant succession of ministers, the praises of the Lord; those truths of gospel grace, which will furnish matter for the everlasting praises of the faithful; and his strength, manifested in the redemption, conversion, and salvation of sinners; and his wonderful works that he hath done for his people in all ages, in delivering them from the hands of their enemies. Note; (1.) The concerns of our salvation are infinitely important, and demand our most serious attention. (2.) Among all the most precious treasures that we can transmit to our children, we must ever esteem the doctrines of the grace of God in Jesus Christ to be the chief, and carefully instruct them in this most inestimable wisdom.

2. The two chief particulars of those instructions, which, with such care, are here enjoined to be delivered down successively through all ages, are the word and works of God: the word of God containing both the law and gospel; the works of God containing all his providential dispensations in behalf of the faithful; and these are carefully to be inculcated in the rising generation: [1.] That they might set their hope in God, and in him alone; renouncing all other confidences, expecting pardon, holiness, strength, and salvation, from his free grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, and not forget the works of God, manifold and marvellous, working for the good of his faithful people; but keep his commandments from a principle of love, and through the grace ministered to them from God: [2.] That they might not be as their fathers, whose ill examples should be their warnings.

P S A L. LXXIX.

Title. מִצְדָּוֹר לְאַסָּף *mizmor leasaph.*] This psalm was probably occasioned by the destruction of the Jewish nation by Nebuchadnezzar. The author describes in it the calamities of the times, and prays God to put an end to them at length. As the prophet Jeremiah lived at this time, and as more than one whole verse of it (see ver. 6, 7:) is found in Jer. x. 25. it is not unlikely that it was written by him.

Ver.

3 Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and *there was none to bury them.*

4 We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

5 How long, LORD, wilt thou be angry? for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

7 For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place.

8 O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.

9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the

glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.

10 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants *which is shed.*

11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;

12 And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, where-with they have reproached thee, O LORD.

13 So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

Ver. 8. O remember not against us former iniquities] This may probably have an especial reference to those first sins which this people had been guilty of, after their coming out of Egypt. Such was their idolatry in respect to the golden calf, of which God tells them, *In the day that I visit, I will visit this sin upon thee*; i. e. this particular sin of theirs. See Exod. xxxii. 34. Accordingly, the Jews have a received maxim, that there is no visitation or punishment in Israel, in which there is not some visitation or infliction for the calf.

Ver. 10. Let him be known among the heathen] *Make thyself known among the nations.* Green.

Ver. 12. And render, &c.] This seems to respect the Edomites chiefly. See Ps. cxxxvii.

REFLECTIONS.—In this world the church of Christ is in a militant state: many are the troubles of the righteous; and whither can they so properly carry their complaints, as to him who is able to save them from the hands of their enemies? We have,

1st, The sorrowful complaint of the Israelites.

1. They are invaded, and their country laid waste. O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance, where God himself abode, and his Israel dwelt by his gift. *Thy holy temple have they defiled*, by entering it, and setting up their abominations there; and this was a bitter grief to the righteous, to whom this temple was dearer than all they held beside. *They have laid Jerusalem on heaps*; burnt and desolate, and the inhabitants buried in the ruins. *Note*; The church of God may be sometimes brought to a very low state of misery, but shall rise as a phoenix from her ashes.

2. They were slain and exposed. *The dead bodies of thy servants*, who fell in the common calamity; for in national judgments it is often seen that the righteous perish with the wicked: or, in hatred to their memory, their enemies dug up their bodies from the graves; these *they have given to be meat unto the fowls of the heavens, and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.*

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3. They were reviled. *We, the few survivors, are become a reproach to our neighbours*: they insult over our fall: Ps. cxxxvii. 7. *a scorn and derision to them that are round about us, who mock at our pretended relation to God, and our professions of expected relief.* *Note*; It is no new thing for the people of God to be loaded with reproach, and turned into ridicule by their ungodly neighbours.

2dly, We have the requests of God's people, under the pressure of their heavy afflictions.

1. They beg that God would avenge their quarrel in the punishment of their oppressors. *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen*; which is not to be considered as an imprecation of private revenge, but of public justice, their evil character provoking the wrath of God, as it is added, *that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.* *Note*; (1.) They who live in ignorance of God, and neglect of prayer, will assuredly be visited with his wrath. (2.) Though God permit his faithful people to be oppressed and harassed for a while, he will speedily avenge them of their persecutors.

2. They intreat him not to remember either their own former iniquities, or those of their forefathers, now also visited upon them; but that their consciences might be purged from guilt, and then they hope the sufferings, which were the effects of their sins, would cease. *Note*; The blood of Jesus alone can purge the conscience; to this therefore the sinner must apply.

3. They importunately pray for speedy deliverance, pleading the greatness of the affliction, and the glory of God concerned in their salvation. *Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us*; for sinners have no merit to plead, nor hope but in God's unbounded love. Their case required speedy relief, or they were undone; *for we are brought very low, or weak*, sin being the disease of the soul, and inevitably mortal, unless the Lord interpose to heal. *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us.* All other help they knew was vain; and their own strength but weakness: therefore they cast their care upon him, as every perishing sinner must do, trusting his promises, as the

A a

God

P S A L. LXXX.

The Psalmist in his prayer complaineth of the miseries of the church. God's former favours are turned into judgments: he prayeth for deliverance.

To the chief musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth. A Psalm of Asaph.

GIVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest *between* the cherubims, shine forth.

2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come *and* save us.

3 Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

4 O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?

5 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.

6 Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

7 Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

8 Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

9 Thou preparedst *room* before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.

10 The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof *were like* the goodly cedars.

God of their salvation, and pleading his own glory, the most prevailing argument; for his name would be dishonoured by their enemies, if they were suffered to prevail and triumph with impunity. *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God?* whilst in the salvation of his faithful people a large revenue of praise would accrue to him; and the deeper their distress, the more would he be magnified in their deliverance. *Note;* (1.) Our greatest extremity is frequently God's opportunity. (2.) The reproaches cast upon God should be a greater grief to us, than any reproaches cast upon ourselves. (3.) When our distress is so great that we can only speak in sighs and groans, even that is a language which God will hear and answer.

4. They engage to render their hearty thanks for such mercy shewn them. *So we thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, in which blessed relation they comforted themselves in confidence of speedy help, will give thee thanks for ever; the voice of prayer exchanged for praise, and their sighing turned into songs of joy. We will shew forth thy praise to all generations;* recording the wonders of his grace, and ministering matter of thanksgiving to their grateful posterity. *Note;* (1.) Praise is the tribute that we owe for mercies; and, though ever paying, we must own ourselves poor, even in thanks. (2.) Our experience of divine grace and Providence should be transmitted to the succeeding ages, to engage their trust in God, and excite their praises.

P S A L. LXXX.

Title. למנצח אל ששנים עדות לאסף מזמור lam-natseach el shoshannim eiduth la-asaph mizmor.] The author of this psalm, under the figure of a *vine*, represents the deplorable state of the Jewish nation, and begs of God, at length to take compassion on them, and to protect some young prince, whom he seemed to have raised up and inspirited with vigour for a restoration. See ver. 17. This young prince seems to be Josiah, by the character of vigour, by the reformation's seeming to depend upon him, ver. 18. and by the author's praying God to appear in their favour, in the face of all the tribes, which, in his time, we know, were assembled together at Jerusalem: just at that time,

probably, this hymn was composed. Others think, that it was written upon the invasion of Judea by Sennacherib. It is plain however from the first verse, that it was composed while the temple was standing. At the same time it is certain, that the spiritual mind will view the whole in an infinitely higher sense, as relating to Christ and his church. See the REFLECTIONS.

Ver. 1. Thou that dwellest between the cherubims] i. e. those two sacred emblematical figures which were set in the most holy place, upon the mercy-seat; before which the high-priest sprinkled the blood upon the great day of atonement.

Ver. 2. Before Ephraim, &c.] That is, before all the tribes; in the face of all the people assembled at Jerusalem. These three in some sense included the whole; Benjamin being incorporated with Judah; Manasseh comprehending the country beyond Jordan, and Ephraim all the rest. Mudge.

Ver. 3. Turn us again, O God] There are evidently four parts in this psalm; all of which conclude with this verse, or with one varying very little from it. In the *first*, the Psalmist intreats God to assist them, as he formerly did their forefathers. In the *second*, he beseeches him to have compassion upon their miserable condition. In the *third*, not to forsake those now, for whom he had already done so much: and the *fourth* concludes with a prayer for their king, and a promise of future obedience, as a grateful return for God's favours. Instead of *turn us*, Mudge reads very properly, *restore us*.

Ver. 4. How long wilt thou be angry? &c.] *How long dost thou preserve thy wrath during the prayer of thy people?* Mudge.

Ver. 8. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt] The Psalmist, whoever he was, describing the Israelites under the simile of a *vine*, continues the metaphor to a considerable length, and carries it on very happily through the several particulars. Among the many excellencies with which this allegory abounds, that nicety observable both in the beginning and close of it, is not the least; the author sliding, as it were, from the comparison into the subject itself, and from thence into the comparison, by an almost insensible gradation.

11 She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.

12 Why hast thou *then* broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?

13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

14 Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;

15 And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch *that* thou madest

strong for thyself.

16 *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man *whom* thou madest strong for thyself.

18 So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.

19 Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

gradation. *Thou hast brought a vine, &c.* See Bishop Lowth's 10th Prelection.

Ver. 10. And the boughs, &c.] And the stately cedars with the branches thereof. Mudge.

Ver. 11. She sent out her boughs, &c.] That is to the Mediterranean sea, and to the river Euphrates; alluding to the extent of the Israelitish dominions. The enemies and destroyers of Israel are represented under the idea of a boar or wild beast. Theodoret says, that Nebuchadnezzar was meant by the Psalmist; and that he terms him very properly *the wild beast of the field*, because he was more fierce than any other monarch.

Ver. 15. And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted] And the stock, &c. and the youth thou hast invigorated for thyself: "The stock of thy own planting, and the man of thy own raising to keep it." So the sense will be continued on to the next verse; which should be rendered, *It is burned with fire, it is plucked up. Let them perish at the rebuke of thy countenance:* where, the vine being again mentioned, it becomes not unnatural to add a prayer for the destruction of its enemies, the boar and wild beast. Mudge.

Ver. 17. Let thy hand be, &c.] Let thy hand be over the prince; thy right arm over the young man thou hast invigorated for thyself. Mudge. God is prayed to let his hand be upon or over him; i. e. to support him in his attacks from the enemies of his country, to influence his counsels with his almighty wisdom, and to enable him to vindicate the honour of his nation.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The eyes of the Lord are ever upon his faithful people, and his ears open to their prayers; to him therefore in every distress they look, and find him ever near to help in time of need.

1. The Psalmist begs God's gracious regard and powerful deliverance. He addressed him as the shepherd of Israel, whose tender care towards the sheep of his pasture had been proved by long experience. *Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; who had done so in time past, and was still ready to manifest the same regard towards them: thou that dwellest between the cherubims, exalted on a throne of grace, to receive the petitions of them that seek him, give ear to our prayers; shine forth, to dispel the gloom which thickens round us: Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, these tribes on their march, Numb. xi. 17. 24. immediately*

following the ark; and come and save us from the power of our enemies, who are too mighty for us. This may be considered as the prayer of the church for the appearance of Christ in the flesh, the Sun of righteousness, whose rising with healing in his wings was the great object of their desire, and his spiritual salvation the great hope of their souls.

2. He humbly expostulates with God on their afflictions. *How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people? appear so at least, by refusing them an answer; or be really displeased with them, because they asked amiss; were insincere, or lukewarm? Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them tears to drink in great measure: so abundant were their sorrows, that even they did not eat or drink, but tears mingled with their repast. Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours, who divide our spoil; and our enemies laugh among themselves, at the easy prey they have gotten, and the disappointment of our hopes. Note, (1.) When we pray, it becomes us well to consider what we say, and in what manner we approach God; lest, by our formality and unbelief, our prayers should be turned into sin. (2.) The way to join the everlasting songs of angels lies frequently, in this world, through the vale of tears. (3.) The people of God will be often the derision of their enemies. But woe to those who laugh now; for they shall mourn and weep, when blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

3. In order to obtain the salvation that he desired, the Psalmist begs the conversion of their souls to God. *Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine,* in token of reconciliation, and then he is sure their hope shall not be delayed, *we shall be saved.* And this is repeated, as the great burden of their prayer; for, this being obtained, every other request would be granted. *Note, (1.)* The soul has already begun to turn to God, on whom this spirit of prayer and supplication is poured out. (2.) The great desire of the awakened sinner is, to obtain reconciliation with God.

2dly, The former favours of God to his Israel are here pleaded as an argument for his present regard towards them in their distress. The church is compared to a vine, of which Jesus is the living root; and to a vineyard, of which God is the husbandman.

1. By the divine mercy and providence they had been brought out of Egypt; the Canaanites disposed to make

P S A L. LXXXI.

An exhortation to a solemn praising of God. God challengeth that duty by reason of his benefits. God, exhorting to obedience, complaineth of their disobedience, which proveth their own hurt.

To the chief musician, upon Gittith : *A Psalm* of Afaph.

SING aloud unto God our strength : make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the tim-

brel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.

3 Blow up the trumpet in the new-moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast-day.

4 For this *was* a statute for Israel, *and* a law of the God of Jacob.

5 This he ordained in Joseph *for* a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt : *where* I heard a language *that* I understood not.

room for them ; and they planted in their stead. Deep-rooted and vigorous, they multiplied exceedingly, and extended their branches unto the sea and the river.

2. They had experienced a sad reverse of state, and inquire into the cause. *Why hast thou then broken down her hedges ?* withdrawn his defence and protection, in consequence of which they were become desolate ; so that every traveller, every enemy, now made inroads upon them, to spoil and lay their vineyard waste. Fierce and cruel as the beasts of the desert, their foes devoured them without pity or remorse : Their cities were burnt with fire ; their land wasted ; and the inhabitants slaughtered : being under God's rebuke, they fell an easy prey to their invaders. *Note ;* (1.) If God corrects, surely there is a cause : sin, sin, breeds all our misery. (2.) The strongest nation becomes an easy prey, the moment God withdraws his protection.

3. They earnestly intreat a return of the divine favour ; that God would from heaven cast a favourable look towards them, and, as he was so able to rescue them, would graciously visit them with his salvation ; nor suffer the vineyard, the planting of his own hands, and therefore dear to him, to be destroyed ; and the branch he had made so strong for himself, the people separated for his service and designed for his glory, to be broken down. Therefore, *let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,* which may be applied to the king of Israel, but in a higher sense belongs to the Lord Jesus, the great repairer of the breaches of his church, who in the fulness of time should become incarnate, *the son of man,* the object of his Father's regard, and made strong for all the arduous work of redemption ; and for himself, because by his undertaking, and the accomplishment of his mediatorial office, glory was given to God in the highest. *Note ;* There is help laid on one mighty to save ; we may therefore boldly trust, and not be afraid.

4. They engage heartily to cleave to God. *So will not we go back from thee :* the all-sufficiency of Jesus would encourage their faith and hope ; and God's love, herein manifested, attach them to his service. *Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name :* so dead and lifeless often are our hearts, that we have no power to pray with any fervency, till the Lord pours out a spirit of prayer and supplication, and then our drooping souls revive. *Note ;* (1.) Though we can do nothing as of ourselves, we can do all things through Christ strengthening us. (2.) Prayer is the daily employment of every one who is truly alive to God.

5. The Psalmist, in behalf of the people of Israel, concludes with reiterating his former supplication for converting grace ; and addressing his prayer to the Lord God of hosts,

so able to save all that come to him, expects in faith the salvation for which he so ardently pleads. *Note ;* Repetition in our prayers is not always vain, but often speaks the language of most importunate desire. Lord, have mercy upon us ! Christ, have mercy upon us ! Lord, have mercy upon us !

P S A L. LXXXI.

Title. לְנוֹצֵחַ עַל הַנְּחִית לְאַפֵּי lamnatfeach al baggittith leasaph.] This psalm is supposed to have been written for the feast of trumpets. See Lev. xxiii. 24. In the Jewish Liturgy it is still made use of upon this occasion. To this the blowing of the trumpet (ver. 3.) refers ; for the new moon in the month Tisri, when this feast was celebrated, was the first day of the Jewish year ; at which time the world was supposed to have been created. See Numb. xxix.

Ver. 2. Take a psalm.] Lift up your voices in a psalm, or take up a psalm. Green.

Ver. 3. Blow up the trumpet, &c.] Blow up the trumpet on the first day of the month, on the new moon, on the day of our feast. The feast of the new moon was always proclaimed by the sound of trumpets. The fixing the time of the new moon, for want of astronomical tables, was done in the following manner : the first persons who observed, or thought they observed, the new moon, were to repair immediately to the grand council to give notice of it. Inquiry was then made into the credibility of the informers, and, secondly, whether their information agreed with such computations as they were then able to make. After which the president proclaimed the new moon by saying מְקַדְּשׁ מְקַדְּשׁ ; i. e. *it is consecrated :* this word was twice repeated aloud by the people ; after which it was ordered to be proclaimed every where by the sound of the trumpet. See Univ. Hist. vol. iii. p. 33. 8vo.

Ver. 5. This he ordained in Joseph.] A solemn charge, which he laid on Joseph when he marched out in the face of the land of Egypt. I heard a language I did not know : Ver. 6. I removed, &c. God is asserting his title to their obedience, from three very remarkable providences towards them : his saving them when they cried to him in their distress, ver. 7. whether in Egypt, or at the Red Sea ; his speaking to them on mount Sinai, from the midst of thunder, where he was hid in darkness ; and his giving them water out of the rock. He begins with saying he had heard a language which he did not understand. That is, (as some explain it) they did not speak the true genuine Hebrew, but a corrupted language, perhaps, with a mixture of Egyptian. This (according to them) is said to shew that contemptible state of barbarism

6 I removed his shoulder from the burden : his hands were delivered from the pots.

7 Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered 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 testify unto thee : O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me ;

9 There shall no strange god be in thee ; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.

10 I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt : open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

11 But my people would not hearken to

my voice ; and Israel would none of me.

12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust : *and* they walked in their own counsels.

13 Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, *and* Israel had walked in my ways !

14 I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.

15 The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him : but their time should have endured for ever.

16 He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat : and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

barbarism to which they were reduced in Egypt before he rescued them. Others, by this language, understand the voice of God, which the Israelites soon after their departure from Egypt heard from mount Sinai, to their great astonishment, as having never before been acquainted with it : and, accordingly, what the purport of that voice or language was, we see in the following verses, even to the end of the psalm, where God is introduced as speaking in his own person, and instructing the Israelites concerning the design of this solemnity ; and withal complaining of their forgetfulness of his benefits, in giving them so great a deliverance from Egyptian slavery.

Ver. 6. His hands were delivered from the pots] His hands from the pots through which they had passed : Chandler. Sec. Pf. lxxviii. 13.

Ver. 7. I answered thee in the secret place of thunder] I spoke to thee in the obscurity of thunder.

*Ver. 10. Open thy mouth wide, &c.] i. e. " I will satisfy thy desires, be they ever so large. Be faithful to me, " and I will fill thee with blessings in profusion." The Chaldee reads, *Open thy mouth to the words of the law, and I will fill it with every thing which is good.* Houbigant renders it, *Who have enlarged thy mouth, and filled it.**

Ver. 15. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves] The haters of the Lord should have lied to him. " The enemies of the Lord ; or, (passively, by a different pointing,) " the hated of the Lord, who were at the same time enemies of the Jewish nation should have been obliged to " speak, fawn, and pretend great respect to him ; i. e. to " the Jewish people." The course of the sense requires it to be thus understood. The singular number is no objection ; for that recurs in the next verse, and there is through this whole speech of God a frequent change of number and person.

Ver. 16. He should have fed them—with the finest of the wheat] i. e. " He would have blessed thee with such plenty, that " in the deserts thou shouldst have found the sweetest refreshments ; and, without any care of thine, bees should " have laid up honey for thee in the rocks, and holes of " trees." In Judæa, the bees used the rocks and ground as hives to lay up their honey. This verse is not to be understood of miraculous feeding ; but is a poetical descrip-

tion of the land of Canaan. Green, after Houbigant, reads, *I would have fed them with the finest wheat, and satisfied them with the choicest honey.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Before we join the songs of angels, the work of praise should be our joyful employment here below. The Psalmist therefore excites the people of God to unite heart and voice in adoring their covenant God, the rock of their salvation ; by whose strength every faithful Israelite is enabled to grapple with all the enemies of his soul, to fulfil every service, and endure every suffering to which the Lord is pleased to call him. To raise the concert high, sweet instruments of music are employed, and the loud trumpet's sound proclaims, on the solemn feast-day, the appointed season for the general assembly, the great Jehovah's praise. *Note ;* The more we regard God as our strength, the surer is our stability.

2dly, When the eternal Jehovah speaks, let every mortal ear attend. *Hear, O my people,* peculiarly bound to be advised and governed by him ; *O Israel, if thou wilt,* or, *Oh that thou wouldst, hearken, unto me.* It was their duty, and God wishes it might be their desire to do so. His peculiar charge to them is,

1. Flee from idolatry. *There shall no strange god be in thee ; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.* This is the first and great commandment : God must be made the supreme object of our faith, fear, and love : whatever creature rivals him in our heart, makes us spiritual idolaters.

2. He enforces the command by two considerations. [1.] His right in them, and their obligations to him. *I am the Lord thy God,* the only object of worship, standing in a peculiar relation to them, and therefore especially demanding it from them ; *which brought thee out of the land of Egypt,* and therefore from gratitude are they most bound to love and serve him. [2.] It would be their highest interest also to cleave to him alone ; *Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it : he will be their all-sufficient portion ; and they cannot ask more than he is willing to bestow on them,* provided they continue faithful. *Note ;* (1.) God's service is our highest interest, as well as duty. (2.) If we had no future promises in view, past obligations should engage our hearts to him. (3.) The prayer of faith can never

P S A L. LXXXII.

The Psalmist, having exhorted the judges, and reproved their negligence, prayeth God to judge.

A Psalm of Asaph.

GOD standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.

ask too much. (4.) They who now have God for their portion, have all that heart can wish.

3. He charges them with their disobedience and ingratitude. *But my people, from whom he had such just expectations, would not hearken to my voice, inattentive and perverse; and Israel would none of me; foolishly as wickedly rejecting their own mercies, and neither willing to serve God as their master, nor content with his love as their portion.*

4. Justly God visited their iniquities. *So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; which is of all judgments the most terrible; for, his grace withdrawn, we are then abandoned to sin and misery, and rush on our destruction, as the horse into the battle: and they walked in their own counsels. Since they were headstrong and obstinate, he left them to their own devices, and the dreadful consequences which must ensue. Note; They who resist God's word and Spirit, have only their own wilfulness to blame, when their destruction cometh.*

5. He expresses his kind wishes for them, and his gracious designs towards them, had they been faithful. *Oh that my people, bound by every tie to approve themselves to him, had hearkened unto me, obeyed my law, and attended to my warnings, and Israel had walked in my ways, so much their interest as well as duty. For then, [1.] They would have been for ever victorious over their foes, and God himself would have appeared to fight their battles, and make them more than conquerors. [2.] They would have uninterruptedly enjoyed the possession of their good land; and all who hated God and his worship, should have submitted themselves unto him, or, lied unto him; so that, though it might be a feigned and forced submission, they should not be able to disturb them. [3.] They would have been blest with plenty of every earthly good: the finest wheat, and honey ready provided for them in the rock, where the bees had formed their hive, would have been their food; of all which, their folly and sin would deprive them, and leave them as wretched as they might have been happy. Note; (1.) Sinners are the greatest enemies to their own souls. (2.) They who attend to the voice of Christ will see all their foes become their footstool. (3.) The supplies of his grace to his faithful people are more strengthening than bread, and sweeter than honey. (4.) If any perish, it is not through want of compassion in God, but through the hardness and impenitence of their own hearts.*

P S A L. LXXXII.

Title. מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף *mizmor leasaph*] This psalm is an admonition to justice, and an upbraiding reproof

against the injustice of the Jewish tribunals; with an appeal to God, the supreme and just judge. The courts of justice in Hezekiah's reign were very corrupt: see Isai. i. 23. where the judges and magistrates are called *princes*, in respect of their superiority over the common people; and here they are called gods, in respect to the fountain of their power, which was from the Most High. In this view the psalm conveys an useful admonition to all ministers of justice; from the supreme judge of the highest earthly tribunal, down to the most inferior and petty magistrate.

*Ver. 1. God standeth in the congregation of the mighty] God presideth in his courts of justice. Hebrew, In the court of justice of God. But the singular seems to be used here collectively for all the courts of justice in the land. See ver. 5. The courts of justice were God's, as the judges were his vicergerents; the charge given them being, Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord; who is present with you in the judgment. 2 Chron. xix. 6. It is plain from Numb. xv. 33. that the word עֵדָה *eidah*, rendered congregation, signifies, properly, a court of justice; to which sense the turn and drift of the psalm immediately leads. Respecting the word אֱלֹהִים *elohim*, or gods, which signifies judges, in this place, see Green, and Exod. xxi. 6.*

Ver. 2. Accept the persons] To accept persons, is become an established expression, with a known meaning, and therefore may be continued; but the original signifies to lift the faces, to abet and countenance the wicked, and give them undue encouragement. Mudge.

Ver. 4. Rid] Rescue.

Ver. 5. They know not, &c.] They are ignorant of their duty, and will not attend to it, but go on in the dark: All the foundations of the land are in a tottering state. Green. Respecting the word foundations, see on Pf. xi. 3. The meaning is, "those who should rule the several nations of the earth uprightly, and preserve justice among all men, are themselves the most unjust, and thereby the authors of all mischief to the world."

*Ver. 6. I have said, Ye are gods] Dr. Wall, in his Critical Notes upon this passage, says, "The name *aleim*, which is the usual name for God Almighty, having been, in the Pentateuch and other holy books written before this psalm, given sometimes to magistrates, judges, princes, and any of the high powers on earth, (for the proper signification of the word is *high powers*;) this psalm teaches them in what sense, and with what limitation, this name is allowed them; namely, that though they are suffered to be called *aleim*, gods, yet they should die like Adam, man; and this verse instructs them, that when*

7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

P S A L. LXXXIII.

A complaint to God of the enemies' conspiracies. A prayer against them that oppress the church.

A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

KE E P not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

“ they sit in judgment, they should remember, that as they act as masters over other men, so God, their master, the true *Alcim*, stands over them, and rebukes them upon occasion, as in ver. 2.” Dr. Hammond observes, that when our Saviour cites these words, John, x. 34. they are introduced thus: *Is it not written in your law? Thence the conclusion is necessary, that this book of psalms was among the Jews looked upon as part of the divine law, in a more wide and diffuse notion of the word; i. e. as the writings of the prophets, and of all who were inspired by God, are styled law.*

*Ver. 7. Fall like one of the princes.] Fall like one of the poor; whom ye treat with so much contempt, as to refuse them justice. See ver. 3. Bishop Hare: who has thus nobly restored the text here, reading הרשים *harashim*, instead of השרים *hassarim*.*

Ver. 8. Arise, O God, &c.] Arise, O God, judge the land thyself: for thou art the rightful possessor of all nations: “Since the judges, thy vicegerents, are so corrupt, take the government of the land into thine own hands.” Green. This verse in a higher sense may refer to the reign of the Messiah; who was to have the heathen, &c. Pf. ii. 8. and to whom God would commit all judgment, John, v. 22.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, All power is from God: the powers that are, are ordained of God: a strong argument to enforce our obedience, and to engage them to rule with uprightness, knowing from whom they have received authority, and to whom they are accountable for the use of it.

1. God's presence and providence in the congregations of the mighty, and among the gods, are asserted. The magistrates of the earth, who receive their honour from him, as his vicegerents upon earth, are appointed to administer judgment with impartiality, according to God's holy word; and his eye is ever upon them, observing their conduct, for which they must answer before him in the great day of his appearing and glory.

2. God gives a solemn charge to his delegates. They are to be the defenders of the poor and fatherless; to do justice to the afflicted and needy, whose poverty, and want of friends to vindicate their rights, expose them to injuries; and, however great or rich their oppressors, they must deliver them out of their wicked hands. *Note;* (1.) They who are poor, are too often trampled upon. (2.) It is a grievous thing when the law is made so expensive, that the poor cannot right themselves; or the injury sustained is more tolerable, than the method of redress.

3. God lodges an accusation against wicked magistrates. *How long will ye judge unjustly, and make oppression more intolerable under the sanction of the law? and accept the persons of the wicked? awed by their greatness, or swayed by personal regard, or influenced by bribes? They know*

not, neither will they understand: plain as the case is, they know not to fear God, and to do justice, and wilfully pervert judgment. They walk on in darkness, partiality having blinded their eyes, and studiously avoiding the light of truth; in consequence of which, all the foundations of the earth are out of course, or moved; for when magistrates are thus unjust and oppressive, confusion and every evil work must ensue. This description is very applicable to the Jewish rulers in the days of Christ, to whom it may also prophetically refer.

2dly, God can humble the highest when they abuse their power.

1. He pronounces their doom. *I have said, Ye are gods; have given you authority as my delegates; and all of you are children of the Most High, exalted to a state of singular eminence. But think not your greatness will protect you in the abuse of your power; for ye shall die like men; though as gods in the eyes of men, yet ye are dying worms in the sight of God, and ready to fall like one of the poor whom ye despise, and to be brought before God's dread tribunal, to answer the charges lodged against you. Note; The mightiest men are mortal; let them therefore stand in awe, and sin not, lest they provoke God to cut them down.*

2. The Psalmist looks up to God as the judge of the earth, to redress these grievances; and this in the high sense with a particular respect to the coming of Christ, for which he prays, who “will judge the folk righteously:” and being appointed heir of all things, and having all judgment committed to him in heaven and in earth, will come quickly according to his promise, and restore all things; redressing the evils his people have suffered in this disordered world, and recompensing tribulation to those who troubled them: *so come, Lord Jesus!*

P S A L. LXXXIII.

*Title. שיר מזור לאספ. שיר *shir mizmor leafaph.*] It has been commonly thought, that this psalm was occasioned by the confederacy mentioned 2 Chron. xx. when it came to pass that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other, besides the Ammonites, came with Jehoshaphat to battle: But Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that it was composed by David, when the Philistines, confederated with these other nations, invaded him. And though only the Philistines are mentioned in the history of that invasion, he supposes the reason of that to be, because they were the principals, and the other nations only allies and confederates of theirs. He thinks it improbable that Jehoshaphat should in this psalm pray to God for such a deliverance as he had wrought for his people by Barak and Gideon, and forget or omit all those which he had wrought by the hands of David his father. And he observes, that in his prayer offered up in the greatest terror of his enemies, Jehoshaphat numbers openly*

2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult : and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

3 They have taken crafty counfel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.

4 They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from *being* a nation ; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

5 For they have consulted together with one consent ; they are confederate against thee :

6 The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites ; of Moab, and the Hagarenes ;

7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek ; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre ;

8 Assur also is joined with them : they have

holpen the children of Lot. Selah.

9 Do unto them as *unto* the Midianites : as *to* Sifera, as *to* Jabin, at the brook of Kifon :

10 *Which* perished at En-dor : they became as dung for the earth.

11 Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb : yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna :

12 Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.

13 O my God, make them like a wheel ; as the stubble before the wind.

14 As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire :

15 So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.

16 Fill their faces with shame ; that they

openly the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir ; and we cannot doubt, says he, that both his fears, and the occasion, called upon him to recount the whole number of his enemies. In answer to these objections, it may be observed, that the reason why Jehoshaphat mentioned only the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, and no more of his enemies, might be the same with that given in the prayer itself for mentioning them at all ; viz. because of their ingratitude to the children of Israel, who never had in the least disturbed or injured them ; no, not when the Israelites were in the greatest straits, and under the strongest temptation to do it ; i. e. when they came to take possession of the land of Canaan. As to the first objection, there seems to be no absurdity in supposing Jehoshaphat to mention those actions under Barak and Gideon, and not those of a later date ; because the country of the Midianites was contiguous to that of the Moabites and Seirites : and when the Psalmist had *them* principally in view, because they were principally concerned in this invasion, and for the other reason just now mentioned, it was natural for him to pray, that they might have no better success in this expedition than their neighbours, the Midianites, had in theirs against his ancestors, when they were defeated by Gideon : and then we may easily conceive, that the mention of this destruction of the Midianites might bring to his mind that other of the Canaanites by Barak ; for both these battles were fought very near the same place : When Sifera's forces were vanquished, the chief place of action was Taanach, a town in the half tribe of Manassih, Judg. v. 19. and the other victory over Oreb and Zeeb, was obtained within the same half tribe, near Abel-meholah and Bethbara, Judg. vii. 22. 24. We may observe too, that the Amalekites were with the Midianites when Gideon overcame them ; and they were now with the Moabites and Ammonites ; and this might be another reason why the Psalmist should mention them upon this occasion. And it is evident enough, that the action under Barak is only mentioned, as it were, by the bye ; and as a thing which,

upon the mention of the other, occurred to the Psalmist's mind ; whereas he returns again to the overthrow of the Midianites and Amalekites by Gideon. So that what is said of Sifera should be read in a parenthesis, thus : " Do thou to them as formerly thou didst to their neighbours, " the Midianites, who were engaged in a like attempt " against thy people ; (or as thou didst unto Sifera and " Jabin, whom thou didst overthrow near the same place ;) " make them, I say, and their princes like Oreb and Zeeb, " yea, make all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, " those princes of Midian, &c." In this manner the Psalmist's thoughts seem to be naturally and easily connected

Ver. 3. Thy hidden ones] God's *hidden* or *treasured* ones, are those faithful ones whom he keeps up safe and precious as his treasures. The Chaldee paraphrase renders it, *Thy hidden treasures* ; and elsewhere, as Dr. Hammond observes, they explain themselves to mean thereby, the habitation of God's presence, or the temple and sanctuary itself.

Ver. 6, 7. The tabernacles of Edom, &c.] They are called the *tabernacles* of the Edomites, from the custom of these Arabians to live in tents all the year long ; encamping sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, as they find convenience for themselves and their cattle ; a custom retained by their descendants even to this day. *Gebal* was once a place of renown : the country of the *Giblites* is mentioned as left by Joshua to be conquered after his death, Josh. xiii. 5 ; and the people of this place were of service to Hiram, king of Tyre, in preparing materials for Solomon's temple : 1 Kings, v. 8. At present this city has lost all its ancient grandeur ; which appears to have been considerable by the remaining ruins of it. But it still retains its name, with very little alteration, which is *Gibyle* : It is situated upon the Mediterranean sea, between Tripoli and Sidon. See Ezek. xxvi. 4, 5, &c.

Ver. 13. O my God, make them like a wheel] This and the following verse seem to allude to the manner of threshing in Judea ; which was generally performed on a mountain, where the corn was threshed by means of a wheel, which

may seek thy name, O LORD.

17 Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:

18 That *men* may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most High over all the earth.

P S A L. LXXXIV.

The prophet, longing for the communion of the sanctuary, sheweth how blessed they are that dwell therein: he prayeth to be restored unto it.

To the chief musician upon Gittith, A psalm for the sons of Korah.

HOW amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!

2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.

4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.

6 Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

7 They go from strength to strength, every

which ran over the stalks. The chaff, on account of this situation, was easily blown about by the wind; and it being customary likewise to burn what remained, it is with great propriety that the Psalmist concludes the description with these words, *As the flame setteth the mountains on fire,* ver. 14.

Ver. 18. That thou, whose name alone, &c.] That thou, whose name is Jehovah, art alone the Most High, &c. Mudge.

REFLECTIONS.—The church on earth is ever militant; and would soon be crushed, were it not for the protection of their glorious Head.

1. The Psalmist directs his prayer to God. *Keep not thou silence,* but hear our cry, and send a word of encouragement to us amid the threatenings of our enemies. *Hold not thy peace,* as if unconcerned at their blasphemies, or conniving at their attempts; *and be not still, O God,* but arise to preserve and protect us from their malice and violence. *Note;* Sometimes the Lord appears to disregard his people's distresses, but it is to quicken them to fly to him for succour with greater importunity.

2. He describes the confederacy formed; urges their wicked designs, and represents their rage and craftiness, against which the people of God would be unable to stand, unless the Lord appeared to strengthen them, and confound their foes. [1.] The quarrel was his own: they were his enemies, and hated him, his laws, and his worship; but, unable any other way to vent their enmity, turned it against his people, *his hidden ones,* who were covered with the shadow of his wings, and their excellencies unknown.

Note; (1.) Whatever pretences men may make for their opposition against God's people, the real cause is enmity against God, whose holiness they cannot endure, and whose image they cannot see in their neighbour, without hatred. (2.) The faithful are hid with Christ in God, and impotent is the rage of their enemies against them. [2.] The confederacy was strong. Might and policy were united against them: ten nations, however divided in interests, were fast leagued against God's Israel; insolent, and confident of success; with schemes deep laid, and in tu-

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multuous rage breathing out threatenings and slaughter; content with nothing less than the extirpation of the very name of Israel. *Note;* (1.) Whatever differences of sentiment men of the world entertain, or however otherwise at variance, all cordially unite in opposing the cause of God and truth. (2.) A wicked world would be heartily glad, if there were neither a preacher nor professor of true religion left; for these are ever their troublemakers. (3.) When all other help fails us, it is a comfort that we have that all-sufficient Lord to fly to, who can still the madness of the people. (4.) Men must know at last that the Lord Omnipotent reigneth, and the execution of deserved vengeance on the ungodly will redound to his everlasting glory.

P S A L. LXXXIV.

Title. לַמְנַצֵּחַ עַל הַגִּתִּית׃ *lamnatseach al haggittith.]* This psalm contains the ardent desires of a pious soul towards God; a pathetic expression of the benefits and joy of his public service; and an encouragement of the people to make the ways thither from all quarters fair and passable. Bishop Patrick thinks that it was composed by some pious Levite, when Sennacherib's army had blocked up the way to Jerusalem, and hindered him from waiting upon the service of God at the temple. But Dr. Delaney has suggested, that it was written by David when he was at peace from all his enemies, and, having settled the ark in its place, had set his heart upon building a temple to God. Let us suppose then, what is not at all unnatural, says this learned writer, that David, upon conceiving this great design of building the temple, had poured out his purpose in fervent prayer to God, imploring his aid and protection, and confiding in his support to the accomplishment of it: Could any words more aptly or emphatically express the fulness of his heart upon this head than those of this psalm? Let us suppose him to have communicated any psalm that he composed upon this occasion to Nathan, his prophet and friend: what other answer could the prophet make to him, on a supposition that this was the very psalm so communicated, than that which we find recorded of him, 2 Sam. vii. 3. *Go, do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee?* *Life of David,* b. iii. c. 1.

B b

Ver.

one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer : give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.

9 Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the

tents of wickedness.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield : the LORD will give grace and glory : no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

Ver. 2, 3. My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow, &c.] Or, My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God: ver. 3. (Yea, as a sparrow, till she finds a house, and a swallow a nest for herself, where to lay her young) for thine altars, &c. See Nold. 873. Green observes, that from the longing to approach the courts of the Lord, expressed in the second verse, it is natural to think that such a comparison was intended as that of our Lord's; The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. Thus perhaps the Psalmist: "The sparrow findeth herself a house, and the ring-dove a nest; but when shall I find access to, what I far prefer to a house of my own—the House of God?" He then breaks out, Happy are they who dwell in thy house. Thus, or in nearly the same manner, the passage is understood by various expositors. Dr. Delaney, however, observes upon it thus: "The author of this psalm speaks of the altars of God in a manner that shews them to be then comparatively desolated. There were at this time two altars erected in the kingdom of Judea to the true God, but neither of them in the place of his own appointment; that at Hebron not attended by any appointed number of priests, which we know of, as was that of Gibeon, although but slenderly, and by a few: so little crowded, that the birds of the air might build unmolested in them. We hear only of one altar after the building of the temple: therefore this psalm was written before that period. The author of this psalm speaks of the tabernacles of God; there were two tabernacles now extant; we hear of no tabernacle after the building of the temple, therefore this psalm was written before that period. The author of this psalm wishes eagerly for the courts of the Lord: The tabernacle had but one court; therefore his wishes must be for the courts of the temple, which were many; and as the temple was not yet extant, these wishes could only mean the author's eager desire to see that temple erected." The following appears a just and easy exposition of the passage: "Even as the sparrow, i. e. with the same joy and delight as the sparrow findeth her house, and the swallow (or wild pigeon שְׂחָבִית deror) her nest, where she שָׁתָה shaithab, hath laid her young; so should I find thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God."

Ver. 5, 6, 7. Blessed is the man, &c.] These words may be rendered, Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; the highways are in the midst of them: Who, passing through the valley of Baca, turn it into a spring; even when the rain filleth the pools. They go from valley to valley: The God of gods shall appear in Sion. Mudge renders these verses in nearly the same manner; and so do the generality of interpreters, who all agree that the original is indeterminate, and attended with

great difficulties. See particularly Houbigant's note. As they set out with an opinion that the verses contain a description of a person's going up to Jerusalem to worship; they appear on that account, in my humble judgment, greatly to have mistaken the original: to which if the learned reader will be pleased to refer, and will consult the ancient versions, he will be inclined to believe that the verses contain rather a description of pious persons trusting in God, as one might very well expect from the preceding part of the psalm: And of all the versions I have met with, the following of Mr. Fenwick's seems to me most agreeable to the original and the context.—"Ver. 5. He is also blest whose present hope thou art."—(Heb. *In such hearts there are מַסְלוֹת mesilloth*, which the Vulgate renders *ascensions*; the LXX, *ἀναβασεις*, and which I would suppose here points at those elevations, aspirations, or breathings after the things above, which are wont to be in the hearts of truly good men.—Ver. 6. "Even now, while passing through the vale of tears, they find the living God their spring of joy:"—(Heb. *ישׁיתובוהוּ ieshithubu*; they make him, the living God, ver. 2. a fountain, a perpetual spring of joy.—"And all around the rain its blessings spreads." Heb. *The rain (the heavenly showers of divine grace) covers them with blessings.* So the ancient versions render *ברכות berakoth*; by which enabled—ver. 7. "They go from strength to strength:"—in the improvements of holiness and virtue;—"And the God of gods is seen in Sion;"—As the power of his grace is appearing thus in their lives.

Ver. 11. The Lord God is a sun and shield] A guard and shield. Houbigant and Bishop Hare. Others read, a fortress and a shield.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have here,

1. The Psalmist admiring the beauty of God's ordinances. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!* Externally the tabernacle appeared without beauty, but within all was glorious; there dwelt the Shechinah; there the incense smoked upon the golden altar, and the ministers of God performed the sacred service. More amiable still the gospel church appears, where God incarnate dwells, where incense of prayer and praise is continually offered, and the glad tidings of salvation proclaimed.

2. The fervent longings of his soul burst forth after God: perhaps now he was at a distance from the sanctuary, but his heart was there. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord;* so intensely were his desires after them: *my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God;* importunate to be restored to the sanctuary, but most importunate to meet God there, and maintain delightful communion

P S A L. LXXXV.

The Psalmist, from an experience of former mercies, prayeth for the continuance thereof: he promiseth to wait thereon, out of confidence of God's goodness.

To the chief musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.

3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger.

4 Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.

5 Wilt thou be angry with us for ever?

munion with him, in the ordinances of his service. *Note;* (1.) A soul which has no delight in God's house, can have no lot in his kingdom. (2.) The thing which makes all the acts of worship so desirable, is the communion therein maintained with the living God, the life and joy of our souls; and without this they are dry, barren, and formal.

3. He looks upon the little birds, and envies them as it were their happiness. *Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest, &c. even thine altars:* not that we can suppose they literally built their nests in these altars, but near them; either in the houses adjoining to the sanctuary, or perhaps within the sacred inclosure; and this was a situation so desirable to the Psalmist, that with them he longed to dwell. Or, The birds have their nests, and lodge securely; but I, a wanderer, can find no resting-place absent from thine altars, *my king, and my God:* As such by faith the Psalmist regarded him, and intimates the hope he had, that as a faithful subject, and true worshipper, the Lord would hear his prayer, and bring him to his blest abode. *Note;* (1.) The meanest abode with God's presence, is better than a palace without him. (2.) They who know the value of the ordinances of God, will seek a settlement where they may be most profitably enjoyed. (3.) When faith can say, *My King, and my God,* we are sure that all our prayers will succeed.

4. He counts them most blessed, who are continually employed in the service and praise of God. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house;* the ministers of the sanctuary, who were in constant attendance: *they will be still praising thee;* and surely, if there be ought like heaven upon earth, it is this blessed work. *Note;* (1.) However despicable in the eyes of men the service of the ministry may appear, it is of all employments the most blessed and honourable. (2.) They who draw nearest to God, and serve him most faithfully, see most abundant cause to praise him continually. (3.) All our strength cometh from the Lord; without him we cannot take one step heaven-ward. (4.) When the heart is engaged, we shall walk with pleasure in God's ways. (5.) Our way to heaven lies through many a difficult pass, and they who would be soldiers of Christ, must be ready to endure hardship. But when our tribulations abound, our consolations abound also; and perhaps the sweetest hours of our lives were those in which we struggled with the greatest obstacles. (6.) The farther a soul goes in the ways of God, the stronger it grows: *Inflaurabit iter vires.* (7.) They can never faint, who make God the strength of their heart. (8.) It will be the unutterable felicity of the faithful soul in the heavenly Zion, to

behold the King in his beauty, and to enjoy the uninterrupted vision of the blessed God.

2dly, Having testified his earnest desire after the courts of God's house, the Psalmist,

1. Intreats a gracious acceptance of his prayer. *O Lord God of hosts,* able to save to the uttermost, and supply the desires of every longing soul, *hear my prayer,* and give an answer of peace: *give ear, O God of Jacob,* our covenant God. *Behold my present situation,* and the ardent breathings of my heart, *O God our shield,* my protector, and the sure hope of every believer; *and look upon the face of thine anointed;* either himself, God's anointed king, or the Messiah, for whose sake he hoped God would be gracious to him; and in whose intercession he trusted, more than in his own supplications. *Note;* (1.) God's praying children may confidently expect their Father's blessing, and be assured that they shall not seek his face in vain. (2.) When God is our shield, then shall we be safe from fear of evil. (3.) Our confidence toward God stands solely on the foundation of the Redeemer's all-prevailing advocacy: when we look to him with an eye of faith, God will look on us with an eye of favour.

2. He professes the high regard that he had for God's courts. *For a day in thy courts,* spent in the blessed work of prayer and praise, meditation and communion with God, *is better than a thousand* spent in every delight which earth can give. *I had rather be a door-keeper,* employed in the meanest offices, as the lower Levites in the temple, or *stand at the threshold,* as the poor beggar, Acts, iii. 1, 2. *in the house of my God,* which endeared relation afforded him the most enlivened satisfaction, and made the house of God so desirable, *than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.* *Note;* (1.) They who never found delight in God's house and worship, prove themselves utter strangers to *his grace and truth.* (2.) One hour's communion with God is as much superior to all the joys of pleasurable sin, as heaven is higher than the earth.

3. He shews the ground of this preference. *For the Lord God is a sun and shield;* a sun to enlighten our spiritual darkness, and cheer us with his bright beams of love; a shield, to protect us from every danger. *The Lord will give,* freely and abundantly, *grace,* according to all our necessities; preventing, justifying, sanctifying, comforting, grace; *and glory* eternal in the heavens, the free gift of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, to every faithful soul. *No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* Indeed, what good can be conceived, which these two, grace and glory, do not include? Be it therefore our care to walk under the influence of such great and precious prom-

wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?

6 Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?

7 Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.

8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear

him; that glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.

11 Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

12 Yea, the LORD shall give *that which is good*; and our land shall yield her increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set *us* in the way of his steps.

mises, and in simplicity and godly sincerity to approve our fidelity to God.

4. They who perseveringly trust God's promises are and shall be partakers of all this blessedness. *O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.* Though he may be unable to appear before God in his courts, he shall have all the blessings of the ordinances of which he is deprived. God is his portion, and what can he wish for more?*

P S A L. LXXXV.

Title. קרח מזמור לבני למנצה lamnat'seach libnei korach *mizmor.*] This psalm is a thankful acknowledgment of God's mercy in turning their captivity, and an humble prayer for the confirming, continuing, and perfecting this mercy. It has some degree of application to David's return to Jerusalem after his flight from Absalom; but much more to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, after the captivity. After having in the first three verses acknowledged the goodness of God, in bringing them back to their own land; from the fourth onward, the author prays God to restore them again to their ancient prosperity. In the eighth he hears God's promise to do it; upon which, in the four last verses he bursts forth into an exultation at the prospect.

Ver. 4. Turn us, O God of our salvation] The meaning is, "Restore us entirely to our former happy state, by completing the deliverance which thou hast begun; and by averting these new troubles which have befallen us." See Ezra, iv. 4, 5, 21, 23. It is not improbable, that this psalm was ordered to be sung presently after the Jews had laid the foundation of the new temple, when they were hindered from proceeding with the work by the opposition of their enemies.

Ver. 6. Wilt thou not revive us again] To send a people into captivity, is to inflict civil death upon them. To restore them to their own land, is to *revive*, or give them a new life: thus the final restoration of the Jewish people is called by St. Paul, *life from the dead*. Green The expression may also be taken in a most spiritual sense.

Ver. 8. I will hear, &c.] *I will hearken what the Lord God will pronounce. Yes, he pronounceth prosperity to his people, and to his favoured ones, provided they return no more to*

folly, i. e. to their old idolatry, and their other crimes; for which God drove them out of Judea. See Mudge.

Ver. 9. That glory may dwell, &c.] That is, "We shall once again see glorious days in our land;" or perhaps, "the glory, the Shechinah, resident among us."

Ver. 10, 11. Mercy and truth, &c.] *The favour and justice which God shewed his people, are considered as coming down from heaven, and meeting and embracing truth and prosperity, springing up from the earth: i. e. as soon as God is determined to shew favour to his people, they are immediately answered by prosperity and plenty, as a necessary consequence of the truth of God's promise.* But in these two verses, in a more eminent manner is signified the reconciliation of God's justice and mercy, and the happy effects of it upon earth, at the coming of the Messiah.

Ver. 13. Righteousness shall go before him, &c.] *Before him righteousness shall walk; and that's the path his feet shall tread:* Hebrew: *he shall set his feet in the way; that way of righteousness,* says Fenwick, (referring the psalm to Christ) in which his harbinger, the Baptist, shall go before him. This blessed way he will adorn by setting his feet, and walking therein himself. In a general view, the righteousness or goodness of God is here poetically represented as going before him, like a *prodromus*, or usher, when he comes in a gracious manner to visit the earth, and as directing his people likewise to walk in the steps of that righteousness. We may render the last clause, *And shall set, or imprint its footsteps in the way.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Experience of past mercies gives encouragement under present distress. Thus the people of God here draw near to him.

1. They thankfully acknowledge his great goodness in time past, and this in many particulars: in his favour shewn them, which is the chief blessing and the spring of all the rest; in the restoration of them from captivity, in the full and free forgiveness of their manifold transgressions; and in the blessed effects thereof, the removal of all that wrath and indignation which they had so highly provoked. *Note;* (1.) Present distress should never obliterate the grateful memory of past mercies. (2.) What can so deservedly engage our thanks, as the deliverance wrought by Jesus for his

* We have in these Reflections considered the Psalm according to its common interpretation: and have, indeed, in our Reflections observed this rule in the general.

P S A L. LXXXVI.

David strengtheneth his prayer by the conscience of his religion, by the goodness and power of God: he desireth the continuance of former grace: complaining of the proud, he craveth some token of God's goodness.

A Prayer of David.

BOW down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy.

2 Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

3 Be merciful unto me, O LORD: for I cry unto thee daily.

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

his faithful people, from the captivity of sin and Satan? (3.) When God pardons, he does it fully as freely; the blood of Jesus sprinkled on the conscience covers all sin. (4.) When guilt is removed, wrath ceases of course.

2. They cry for mercy and salvation under their present troubles. *Turn us, O God of our salvation:* they had backslidden, and suffered for their faithlessness: therefore they beg of God to turn them from their sins, that their sufferings may be removed; and plead the covenant of mercy, which still affords them grounds of hope: *and cause thine anger toward us to cease*, sin, the cause of it, being removed. *Shew us thy mercy, O Lord*, how thy grace abounds beyond all our demerit, *and grant us thy salvation*; appear for our deliverance, and make us know that thou art able to save to the uttermost. *Note;* (1.) Though we may have been unfaithful, God is not inexorable; when we are led to cry, *Turn us*, he will return in mercy. (2.) No salvation can be hoped for, while we continue in our sins, and without desire to part from them. (3.) All that a sinner can ever ask at God's hands is mercy: unless he save freely without respect to our deserts, we are undone eternally.

3. They humbly expostulate on his displeasure now testified towards them. *Wilt thou be angry with us for ever?* That we have deserved thy anger we own, but must perish if it be not removed. *Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?* no; thou art still, though our offended, yet our covenant God, and wilt not retain thine anger for ever towards returning penitents. *Wilt thou not revive us again with words of consolation, with the light of thy countenance, and the interposition of thy grace and providence, raising us from our state of languishing through our backsliding, and from the sufferings under which we are oppressed; that thy people may rejoice in thee*, experiencing thy love, power, and faithfulness, and ascribing to thee the entire glory of their salvation? *Note;* They who experience the power of restoring grace, will rejoice in God their Saviour, and speak, to his glory, of the wonders of his grace.

2dly, The Psalmist's prayer quickly meets an answer of peace.

1. He waits in confidence of being heard and answered. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak*, patiently, composedly, and confidently expecting a reply to his petitions; *for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints*; they are his, separated for his blessed work and service. *But let them not turn again to folly, to sin and backsliding.* *Note;* (1.) They who pray, should expect an answer. (2.) When God has spoken peace to our souls, let us be careful not to provoke him again to withdraw it from us, through our folly.

2. He enlarges on the blessings which in faith he expects to receive, and seems particularly to have in view the coming of the glorious Messiah and his kingdom, the great hope and happiness of Israel. *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; his salvation*, for from God alone cometh our help; and it is *nigh*; when believers are most oppressed he is at hand; and those who *fear him* will not be forsaken by him in any of their distresses: and this may refer to the Lord Jesus, whose *day*, by faith, the believers of old beheld approaching, and rejoiced in his salvation; *that glory may dwell in our land*, honourable as well as safe, under the divine protection, and most eminently glorious by the appearing of Immanuel, and the preaching of the everlasting gospel. *Mercy, or grace, and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other*; so full of these good fruits is their land, and such harmony maintained among the Israel of God; or rather in the Redeemer's person grace and truth are met, John, i. 14. 17. grace in the most transcendent manner shewn to perishing sinners, and God's faithfulness to all his promises eminently manifested; the salvation of God now fully revealed and magnified, and peace on earth and good will to men restored, Luke, ii. 14. The punishment of sin is exacted, yet the sinner saved; the justice of God awfully executed, and withal abounding grace extended to the fallen sons of Adam. *Truth shall spring out of the earth*, either the gospel-word, so universally spread abroad, as grass covers the earth watered with vernal showers; or the truth of divine grace springing up in the heart, through the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Spirit of truth; *and righteousness shall look down from heaven*, the righteous God being well pleased with beholding the Redeemer executing his work of redemption, and regarding with delight all those who, washed in his blood, are now entirely justified. *Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good*; not merely temporal gifts, but the greater spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, of pardon, grace, and glory; *and our land shall yield her increase*; not only abundance of corn and wine and oil, but those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God; or the Saviour himself born on earth, the most blessed fruit it ever produced. *Righteousness shall go before him*, in perfect righteousness all his ways will be directed; or it may signify a righteous person, as John the Baptist, sent to prepare the way of the Lord; *and shall set us in the way of his steps*, pointing us to the Lamb of God, and teaching us to be the followers of him in faithfulness and truth, that we may be led into the paths of everlasting peace.

P S A L.

5 For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

6 Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.

8 Among the gods *there is none like unto thee, O LORD: neither are there any works like unto thy works.*

9 All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O LORD; and shall glorify thy name.

10 For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

12 I will praise thee, O LORD my God,

with all my heart, and I will glorify thy name for evermore.

13 For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

14 O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.

15 But thou, O LORD, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

16 O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me: give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.

17 Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

P S A L. LXXXVI.

Title. תפלה לדוד *tephillah ledavid.*] This Psalm seems to have been composed by David during his afflictions under Saul. It was afterwards, as the Jews relate, made use of by Hezekiah, when the Assyrians made an attempt upon Jerusalem. The first words of it are indeed the same with Hezekiah's in 2 Kings, xix. 16. and the 8th and 9th verses may be very fitly accommodated to that history; but the rest a great deal better to David; who, in this psalm, personates his great root and offspring the man Christ Jesus, labouring in the spirit of prophecy to express something of that earnestness and humility with which he poured out his soul, while he dwelt here in the form of a servant, pursued by cruel men, and bearing our iniquities. See Fenwick.

Ver. 2. For I am holy] For I am thy favoured one. Mudge. For I am merciful. Green; which seems a very proper translation; and is as if the Psalmist had said, "Shew that mercy to me which I am so ready and willing to shew to others." It appears, however, from Ps. xvi. 10. that the same word is peculiarly appropriated to Christ, the *Holy one of God*: in which sense it may well be understood, according to what we have observed on the title.

Ver. 9. All nations, &c.] This, if applied to Hezekiah, may signify all the neighbouring nations. See 2 Chron. xxxii. 23. But it may also be considered as a prediction of the calling of the Gentiles under the Messiah. See Rom. xv. 9.

Ver. 11. Unite my heart, &c.] Keep close my heart, Mudge. The expression denotes the contrary to hypocrisy, or to an insincere and partial obedience, as commonly expressed by a double heart.

Ver. 13. Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell] Thou hast delivered my life from the grave beneath. Green. "Thou hast often snatched me from extreme dangers, (See 1 Sam. xxiii, &c.) which, like an abyss and bottomless pit, were ready to swallow me up."

Ver. 17. Shew me a token for good] Vouchsafe me a token of thy goodness, that they who hate me may see it and be ashamed, and be convinced that thou, O Lord, art he who helpest me and comfortest me. Bishop Hare and Green.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The same composition may breathe the language of prayer and praise, and our hymns speak our request for mercy, as well as our thankfulness for what we have received.

1. He intermixes his prayers and pleas for mercy and salvation. Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear me, speaking after the manner of men, and intimating the great condescension of God, when he takes notice of such poor worms as we are, and vouchsafes a hearing to our imperfect supplications; for I am poor and needy; this is his plea, for God hath promised to hear such, and will be magnified in his mercy towards them who have nothing but their wants and miseries to bring to him. Preserve my soul, or my life, the life of his body, from Saul's enmity, or the more precious life of his spirit, which, in his sojourning among idolaters, amid temptations, and far from the ordinances of the sanctuary, was in danger; for the greatest saint, without God's continual preservation, would quickly fall. His plea is, for I am holy, innocent of all the accusations laid against him by Saul and his courtiers; and also being renewed by divine grace, he pleads it as an argument for God's carrying on his work in his soul. Note; However poor we are, yet, if rich in grace, we need never repine at our lot. O thou, my God, save thy servant; he expected not salvation in any other, but hoped to find it in him, his reconciled God; in whose love he had a precious interest, as being his servant, and therefore entitled to his protection; and that trusteth in thee, not in his own holiness, but God's grace, and therefore God's faithfulness was engaged to him for the fulfilment of his promises. Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for merit he utterly disclaimed, and now in
time

P S A L. LXXXVII.

The nature and glory of the church. The increase, honour, and comfort of the members thereof.

A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah.

HIS foundation is in the holy mountains.

time of need sought the promised mercy; for I cry unto thee daily, and therefore, waiting on God in his appointed way, was emboldened to expect the help he wanted. Rejoice the soul of thy servant with discoveries of thy pardoning love, with thy comforting Spirit, and with deliverance from his present trouble: and he urges this argument, for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, as an oblation on God's altar, devoted to his service; and whoever thus continues instant in prayer, will be sent away rejoicing in God.

2. He expresses his confidence in God's grace and help. For thou, Lord, art good, essentially so in himself, and manifesting in innumerable instances his goodness to his believing people, and ready to forgive, which is an especial proof of it, nothing being so desirable to a guilty soul as the pardon of sins; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee: knowing the riches of God's grace, his heart rested satisfied in him, and left his case contentedly in God's hands. Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications; and being fully persuaded of God's willingness to hear and help him, he professes it as his continual purpose to wait upon God, In the day of my trouble; for such must every faithful soul more or less expect, from temptation, opposition, and affliction. I will call upon thee, committing all the concerns of body and soul into thy hands; for thou wilt answer me, of this I rest assured, and therefore wait in confidence to see the salvation of God.

2dly, Having professed his own dependance upon God, the Psalmist,

1. Ascribes to him the glory due unto his name, and therein shews what ground he had to trust, and not be afraid, when this glorious God was his support. Among angels, or men, none can be found comparable with him, or who can presume to rival his stupendous works of creation, providence, and redemption. All nations are the work of his hands, and must own him their great Creator: They shall come and worship him alone, and glorify his name, by yielding themselves up to his service, in body, soul, and spirit, as bound for ever to approve themselves his faithful servants, which prophecy will receive its full and most glorious accomplishment in the latter days of the Messiah's kingdom. Infinitely great in his adorable perfections, he worketh wonders in nature, providence, and grace; which angels, as well as men, behold with admiration: and as there is none like him, neither is there any besides him: thou art God alone!

2. He prays for a heart to fear and follow him. Teach me thy way, O Lord; for we are blind and ignorant without divine teaching, and never else could know the way of salvation. I will walk in thy truth; when taught of God what is truth, he would follow it, particularly when instructed in the knowledge of Christ, the way, the truth,

2 The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia,

and the life, in whom we must walk, believing in him, and expecting happiness from him. Unite my heart to fear thy name, solely and sincerely attached to God, fearing nothing but to offend him, desiring nothing so much as to please him; and this can only be received from God, whose grace can alone enable us thus to walk.

3. He acknowledges the everlasting obligations lying on him to bless and praise God's name, and declares it is his full purpose of heart to do so. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, most cordially, and with delight; and I will glorify thy name for evermore, whilst I have a being upon earth, and through the days of eternity; and with abundant reason: For great is thy mercy toward me, yea, greater than I am able to express; and to me in such an astonishing manner declared; thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell, when by his sins, especially in the matter of Uriah, he had so justly deserved the wrath of God, and yet had obtained mercy, and, plucked as a brand from the burning, stood a monument of God's infinitely rich and free grace. Note; The greatest saints of God reflect with deepest gratitude on the mercies they have experienced; and it heightens the songs of heaven, when those who are advanced to that glorious place look down on the flames beneath, and see on what a precipice of misery they stood when God snatched them from the everlasting burnings.

4. He lodges his complaint with God against his enemies. O God, the proud are risen against me, who could not bear the thoughts of his exaltation; and the assemblies of violent men, or terrible ones, have sought after my soul, confederate to destroy him, plotting his ruin, and with cruelty and malice breathing forth slaughter; and have not set thee before them, regardless of God's omniscience, and fearless of his vengeance. Note; (1.) Proud men cannot bear the rebuke of a holy conversation, and therefore turn persecutors of the righteous. (2.) Though the wicked forget God, he does not forget them; but will, to their confusion, return their mischievous devices upon their own heads.

5. He professes his dependance on God's kindness, to save him from their malice. But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious; though they were cruel, he was kind; though they persecuted, he would protect: long-suffering, even to the wicked, and much more to his believing people; plenteous in mercy, to redeem them from every misery, and truth, to engage their reliance on the faithfulness of his promises. Note; They who are under the care of this good God, need not fear the enmity of evil and malicious men.

6. He renews his prayer. O turn unto me with kind regard, and have mercy upon me, for thereon my hope is placed; give thy strength unto thy servant, for my own is weakness itself, but thine almighty, and save the son of thine handmaid, as one born in God's house, from days of infancy devoted

and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this *man* was born there.

5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest

devoted to his service, and who had taken the Lord by choice for his blessed master. *Shew me a token for good*, both for his own comfort, and visibly for his enemies' confusion, *that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed of their malice and enmity; because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me*; and therefore in fighting against his believing servant, they will find they have been impotently struggling against that omnipotent arm which protected him. *Note*; (1.) All our spiritual strength is from God alone; without him, we are weak and helpless as infancy. (2.) Whom God helps, he comforts; his assistance being the pledge of his love. (3.) Sooner or later the enemies of God's people will be ashamed of their impotent malice.

P S A L. LXXXVII.

Title. *לְבַנֵי קֹרַח מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר* *libnei korach mizmor shiir.*] The inscription of this psalm does not attribute it to David, nor is the occasion on which it was penned particularly mentioned. It is certain that it was written in praise of Jerusalem, and of the particular privileges of which it could boast above all other the most celebrated cities in the world: and by the manner of its beginning, I should think it was written when the author had completed his design in the repairing, enlarging, beautifying, and fortifying Jerusalem: and therefore I ascribe it to David, and think it was sent by him to the sons of Korah, to be sung by them on the solemn festival which was appointed to celebrate the foundation and building of the city. This conjecture is in some measure countenanced by the Chaldee paraphrast, who makes this psalm begin at the second verse: *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion*; and the first verse, *His foundation is in the holy mountains*, to be part of the inscription or title, which, according to him, must have been: "A song of the foundation in the mountains of holiness." Houbigant thinks the psalm was first sung upon laying the foundations of the temple in Mount Zion. But it is the city, and not the temple, which is spoken of as being founded in these mountains. The beginning of this psalm is striking, and, what a sudden exclamation of wonder and joy should be, abrupt and short: The ending, what every citizen of Jerusalem who knew and valued the privileges he was entitled to, would joyfully sing: *All my springs are in thee*. These circumstances, together with his glorying over it, for the preference which God gave it to all the other cities of Judah; his representing it as a greater honour to be born in, and an inhabitant of it, than to be a citizen of any of the most celebrated cities in the world; his assurance that God would protect and establish it: God's keeping a register of all the nations, and marking therein the citizens of Zion as his favourite people; and the joy and triumph of the inhabitants upon a review of their peculiar privileges, are beauties which will not be overlooked by a careful reader. See Dr. Chandler.

Ver. 1. *His foundation is in the holy mountains, &c.*] *It is his foundation in the mountains of holiness*: that is, "Zion is of God's founding." So *Iai. xiv. 32.* *The Lord hath*

founded Zion, &c. See *Pf. cxxxii. 13.* And as Jerusalem was built on several hills, mount Zion, mount Moriah, and other lesser ones, they are called *holy mountains* or *hills*, the whole city being consecrated to God; and the city itself *the holy city*, because God dwelt more especially therein, as it was the fixed abode of the ark of his presence. If we imagine the Psalmist to be surveying the new-built city from some eminence, or from the terrace on the roof of his palace, just as he had finished it, how natural was it for him to cry out with pleasure and gratitude to God, who had enabled him to complete this great design; *It is his foundation in the mountains of holiness!* Chandler.

Ver. 3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee*] *Glorious things, it shall be said, are in thee*; i. e. all nations shall speak of them with surprise and wonder. Chandler.

Ver. 4. *I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon*] *Shall I celebrate Egypt and Babylon to them that know me? Behold, O Philistia, Tyre, and Cush, such a man was born there.*—"Is this his honour, shall I mention this as his privilege, that he was born in one or other of those celebrated cities and countries? No; *But of Zion it shall be said, this or the other person was born in her.* To be a citizen of any other place, is an honour nothing comparable to that of being a citizen of Zion." Thus Buchanan seems to have understood the words in his elegant version:

Tecumne Babylon se audeat componere?
Tecumne Memphis insoleas?
Præclara quamvis et Palæstina et Tyros
Jactet virorum Robora:
Nihil ad Sionem fortibus factam viris,
Favore tutam Numinis.

R. S. Jarchi also expounds the words much in the same manner. "The *Philistines, &c.* extol *Egypt* and *Babylon*, nations celebrated for antiquity, learning, and arts, when they say, *Such a man was born there.* But that praise which formerly belonged to them shall now return to Zion; of which it shall with much more justice be said to his honour, *This or the other person was born there.*" The privileges of being citizens of Zion were unspeakably greater than what the inhabitants of any other city in the world were entitled to; as the city had God for its founder, as the ark of his presence dwelt in it, as the solemnities of his worship were with great magnificence performed there, as it was governed by his laws, and as it was under his immediate and constant protection. In these things no other city could compare or vie with it.

Ver. 5. *The Highest himself shall establish her*] That is what David promised himself; that as he had built the city under the direction of God, and had fixed for the ark a proper habitation in it; so God would now establish it, by guarding it from its enemies, and providing for its future prosperity: and I think it appears from hence, that this and the foregoing verse are the Psalmist's own words, and not the words of God concerning Jerusalem, as *Grotius, Le Clerc, and others, make them.* Chandler.

Ver.

himself shall establish her.

6 The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, *that* this man was born there. Selah.

7 As well the fingers as the players on instruments *shall be there*: all my springs are in thee.

P S A L. LXXXVIII.

A prayer, containing a grievous complaint.

A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah: to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, Mafchil of Heman the Ezrahite.

O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:

2 Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;

3 For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man *that hath* no strength.

5 Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.

6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.

7 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and

Ver. 6. The Lord shall count, &c.] Jehovah shall record it when he registers the nations: This man was born there. The Psalmist here describes the peculiar regard of God to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and figuratively represents him as keeping a register of all the nations of the earth, and marking as it were in that register every one who was a citizen of Jerusalem, as thereby intitled to his distinguished favour and protection.

*Ver. 7. As well the fingers, &c.] The literal version of the Hebrew is, They shall sing like those who lead up the dance: all my springs are in thee: i. e. "They shall sing very joyfully, and the burden of the song they should sing in praise of Zion should be this; All my springs or fountains are in thee; All my kindred shall sing and rejoice in thy safety," as Jarchi explains it. And I would observe, that the original word מַגְיָנַי *mangianai*, which we render *springs*, is used in a figurative sense to denote any one's posterity. Thus Prov. v. 16. *Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad*; i. e. "Thy posterity be exceeding numerous:" and thus in the place before us, the inhabitants of Jerusalem should triumph and sing, "All my springs or fountains; all my friends, my family, my children, are in thee; are thy citizens, and enjoy the glorious privileges thou art favoured with." Thus there is a harmony and connection between all the parts of this ode, which I think is very intelligible, and is very poetical.*

REFLECTIONS.—The Psalmist begins, as if he had been musing on the glories of God's Zion, and then instantly bursts forth in describing them.

1. *His foundation is in the holy mountains*; the Lord hath laid the foundations of his church on Christ, the rock of ages; it is supported by his promises, and stands firm in the beauty of holiness.

2. He delights in the work of his own hands. *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob*; though all are dear to him, yet not alike dear; in Zion he hath chosen to fix his peculiar abode. *Note*; God is present in every family of his worshipping people, and accepts their service; but his especial delight is in the great congregation, where all his people appear together before him.

3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.* Jeru-

salem was a beautiful place, the joy of the whole earth, adorned with stately palaces, and most adorned with God's magnificent temple; but even this has no glory in comparison with that church of the faithful and glorified Redeemer (which so far excelleth,) the spouse of Christ, the purchase of his blood; where all are kings and priests unto God: the walls salvation, the gates praise; the building eternal; and which duration, so far from ruining, must improve.

P S A L. LXXXVIII.

Title. שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְבְנֵי קֹרַח, לְמַנְצַח עַל מַחֲלַת מַחֲלַת שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְבְנֵי קֹרַח לְעֹנֹת מַשְׁכִּיל לְהִינֹן הָאֲזָרְחִי *shbir mizmor libnei korach lannatfeach al machalath leannoth maskiil lebeinan baezrachii*] The author of this psalm is called *Heman the Ezrahite*; but who he was, or when he lived, is not known. See 1 Chron. ii. 6. Bishop Patrick supposes him to have lived in the time of the captivity, being confined in prison; and that there, in the bitterness of his soul, he composed this melancholy lamentation. מַחֲלַת לְעֹנֹת *machalath leannoth* may be rendered by *the hollow instruments for answering*. Houbigant translates it, *for the choirs, that they may answer*. See the title of the 53d psalm. Mudge renders לְעֹנֹת *leannoth*, to create dejection; to raise a pen- sive gloom or melancholy in the mind; agreeably to the tenor of the psalm. Fenwick applies the title of this psalm to our Saviour. See his *Thoughts*, p. 67.

Ver. 1. I have cried] In the day-time I cry unto thee; in the night I call aloud before thee.

Ver. 4, 5. I am as a man that hath no strength] I am become as a man that hath no substance: [A mere shadow without solidity.] Ver. 5. Set loose among the dead: [Set at liberty, as it were, from under the hand, the government of God:] Like the slain that are laid in the sepulchre, whom thou rememberest no more; for they are cut off from under thy hand. The meaning is, that he was removed from all the affairs and conversation of men, as much as if he were really dead. Thus in 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. it is said of Uzziah the leper, *that he dwelt in a several house*; or, according to the original, *in a house of freedom*; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord: The meaning of which is, that, after the manner of lepers, he was excluded from the temple, and dwelt in some separate place without Jerusa-

thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Selah.

8 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me: thou hast made me an abomination unto them: *I am* shut up, and I cannot come forth.

9 Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

10 Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Selah.

11 Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? *or* thy faithfulness in destruction?

12 Shall thy wonders be known in the

dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

13 But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.

14 LORD; why castest thou off my soul? *why* hidest thou thy face from me?

15 *I am* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth up: *while* I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

16 Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.

17 They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.

18 Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, *and* mine acquaintance into darkness.

lem, which was therefore called *the house of freedom*, because such as were there were exempt from the common affairs of the world: and in like manner they who are as it were dead, and laid in their graves, i. e. overwhelmed and buried in affliction, are here said to be free.

Ver. 8. I am shut up, and I cannot come forth] This is the description of a person confined for leprosy, which causes him to be avoided, as a subject of abhorrence even to all his friends.

Ver. 10—13. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead] The Psalmist in this, and the following verses, exaggerates his own distress, and the seeming impossibility of relief, by representing himself as a dead man, and his state of misery and affliction as a state of death: nor can the words be taken in the literal sense, except they be referred to Him to whom God did indeed declare *his loving-kindness in the grave, and his faithfulness in death*. We need not observe to the scriptural reader, that strong figures of this kind are extremely common in the Hebrew poets.

Ver. 15. I am afflicted, and ready to die] *I have been low and expiring from my youth*: i. e. "Even from my youth I have laboured under this misery, which now so dreadfully afflicts me."

Ver. 17. Like water] "Like floods coming from several places, and at last meeting together to inclose and swallow me up."

Ver. 18. And mine acquaintance into darkness] *My acquaintance are not to be seen*. Literally, *My acquaintance a place of darkness*; Lost in darkness; vanished out of sight.

REFLECTIONS.—1. The prayer of the Psalmist is fervent and importunate. O Lord God of my salvation, from whom alone I can expect relief, *I have cried day and night before thee*, long and often, and still continue to look up, though my troubles are unabated. *Let my prayer come before thee*, and *incline thine ear unto my cry*; thus in the days of his flesh the Redeemer poured out his prayers, with strong crying and tears, unto him who was able to save him from death, Heb. v. 7. and, in all our trials, must we continually fly to a throne of grace, and never faint, or be weary of

praying or waiting upon God, till he is pleased to visit us with his salvation, and say to our tempestuous souls, *Peace, be still*.

2. His sorrows are enlarged. *For my soul is full of troubles*, and the troubles of the soul are the severest of all; and *my life draweth nigh unto the grave*, unable to support the burden; so dreadful were his apprehensions, now that the light of God's countenance was withdrawn. The Son of God repeated these deep complaints, and with a bitterness which never any soul but his tasted, Matt. xxvi. 38. xxvii. 46.

3. He is reduced to the brink of despair. *I am counted with them that go down into the pit*, as a dead man; or among malefactors, whose dead bodies were cast into the pit together. *I am as a man that hath no strength*, helpless and hopeless: *free among the dead*, of that ghastly family, *like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more*, no longer the objects of his providential care, and they are cut off from thy hand, no more stretched out to feed them, or by thy hand, and that is of all deaths the most miserable, which is sent as a judgment from God. *Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit*, sunk under the most deplorable distress, *in darkness*, both with regard to the concerns of body and soul; and *in the deeps*, lower he can hardly be, but in the belly of hell. Among those who go down to the lowest pit, yea, among the vilest malefactors was the Son of God reckoned; and, though the mighty God, as if unable to help himself, he yielded up his body to be nailed to the tree: with the slain he lay down, and visited the mansions of the dead, cut off by the hand of justice, under the sins of a world. 1 John, ii. 2.

4. A sense of divine wrath was the bitterest part of his sufferings. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me*, such were then his gloomy fears: and *thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves*, one dark providence and distressing fear succeeding another, as if God was about to overwhelm him in the abyss of misery. What he feared, really fell on Jesus, our substitute, who bore our sins, and the wrath due to them, in his own body on the tree; and over him every wave of justice broke terrible, till in death he paid the dreadful debt.

5. His friends deserted him in his troubles; but he saw
God's

P S A L. LXXXIX.

The Psalmist praiseth God for his covenant, for his wonderful power, for his care of his church, for his favour to the kingdom of David: then, complaining of contrary events, he expostulateth, prayeth, and bleisseth God.

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

I Will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

2 For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.

3 I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,

4 Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

5 And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.

6 For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? *who* among the sons of the

mighty can be likened unto the LORD?

7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the faints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.

8 O LORD God of hosts, who *is* a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?

9 Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.

11 The heavens *are* thine, the earth also *is* thine: *as for* the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.

12 The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.

13 Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, *and* high is thy right hand.

God's hand in the affliction. *Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; to find a kind and compassionate friend is an alleviation to our sorrows, but he had none; or by divine Providence they were removed from him, or incapacitated for serving him; thou hast made me an abomination unto them; perhaps, like Job's friends, they misinterpreted his sufferings, as if they proved him a wicked man, and shunned him as such, which made it the more grievous; thus was Jesus also betrayed by one disciple, denied by another, and forsaken of all. Let no follower of his therefore wonder, if dearest friends forsake, slight, or abhor him; he is then but as his Lord.*

6. His case appeared remediless. *I am shut up, confined with bodily affliction, or in a prison of spiritual darkness, and I cannot come forth, see no door open, have no power to help myself, and can only vent my disconsolate sorrows. The agonizing prayers of Jesus spoke his deep apprehensions of the Divine wrath, from which the Humanity shrunk, and wished the cup to pass from him.*

P S A L. LXXXIX.

Title. מִשְׁכִּיל לְאֵתָן הָאֶזְרָחִי *maskil leeithan haezrah-chii.* The author of this psalm lived either in the time of Jehoiachin or Zedekiah, whose misfortunes he laments very pathetically. It appears, says Mudge, by the conclusion from verse 38, to be written in some great distress of one of the kings of the line of David; in which the author reminds God of his gracious promises to David and his posterity. It is conducted with great skill. The Jewish interpreters themselves apply several passages of it to the Messiah.

Ver. 3. I have made a covenant with my chosen] Mudge reads this and the following verse in a parenthesis, and supposes the sense of the 2d to be continued to the 5th.

Thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the heavens, is explained by the 36th and 37th verses. Houbigant prefixes to the 3d verse, *For thou hast said.* It is very evident, that these words can be understood of David but in a limited sense: they refer principally to the Messiah.

Ver. 6. Who among the sons of the mighty, &c.] i. e. Of the most mighty princes upon earth: But some understand this of the angels, who, in Job, i. 6. are particularly styled *the Sons of God.*

Ver. 8. Or to thy faithfulness round about thee?] *And thy faithfulness encompasseth thee.* This poetical phrase seems to allude to the expression in the foregoing verse, concerning the faints or angels *that are about him;* and signifies, that as they wait upon God, and execute his will; so, far above the strength of those, God's fidelity, exactly *encompasses him,* and he is ready to perform whatever he has promised.

Ver. 10. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces] This refers to the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. "Thou trodest under foot the pride of the Egyptian crocodile, "with as much ease as one treads upon the carcase of "a man slaughtered in the field of battle;" for it should be rendered, *Thou crushedst under foot Rahab, as one who is slain.* Mudge. Kennicott would render it, *Thou, like a man of war, hast broken Rahab, or Egypt, in pieces.* See Exod. xv. 3. 6.

Ver. 12. Tabor and Hermon] These two famous mountains of Judea, the first on the west, and the second on the east of it, are here put for the eastern and western quarters of the world. *Shall rejoice in thy name,* is a figurative and poetical expression, signifying, "They shall "afford matter for thy praise, who enrichest them "by thy bountiful providence." We may render it, *The east and the west.*

14 Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

15 Blessed *is* the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.

16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

17 For thou *art* the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.

18 For the LORD *is* our defence; and the Holy One of Israel *is* our king.

19 Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people.

20 I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:

21 With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.

22 The enemy shall not exact upon him: nor the son of wickedness afflict him.

23 And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.

24 But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall* be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

25 I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.

26 He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.

27 Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

28 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.

29 His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

30 If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;

31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments:

32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

33 Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him: nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing *that is* gone out of my lips.

35 Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.

36 His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.

37 It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.

Ver. 14. Are the habitation of thy throne] Or, the preparation. God's throne is here elegantly represented as prepared by justice and equity, by mercy and fidelity. By these all his judicatures are managed, and these are the *precones*, or heralds, who, whenever he administers justice, go before, and erect his tribunal. Mudge, and several others, render it, *are the basis of thy throne*. See Psal. lxxxv. 13.

Ver. 15. That know the joyful sound] This probably refers to the trumpet, which was always used by the express command of God at the Jewish festivals. And as the ideas in the preceding verses are taken from God's deliverance of the people from Egypt, and his august appearance on Mount Sinai, where the awful trumpet proclaiming his presence was heard; so here the joyful sound may refer to that trumpet, which in the public worship, as heretofore on Mount Sinai, proclaimed the approach of God, and summoned the people to his worship. The ideas in the following verses have the same reference. Compare Numb. xxiii. 21.

Ver. 18. For the Lord is our defence, &c.] Mudge connects this with the following verse thus: *Yes, to the Lord belongs our shield, and to the Holy One of Israel our king: ver. 19. From the time that thou spakest in vision to thy favourite, and saidst, &c. Our shield, says he, is explained by the king; as in Psal. lxxxiv. 9. "He is the Lord's, the Lord owns*

"him; has taken him as his own, under his special protection; from the time he spoke to the prophet Nathan the prophesy which follows with regard to David." Nathan was favoured with God's immediate revelation, 2 Sam. vii.

Ver. 22. Shall not exact upon him] *Shall not oppress him; Mudge.* Or, according to the original, *deceive him*.

Ver. 25. I will set his hand also in the sea, &c.] i. e. "His empire shall extend from the Mediterranean sea to the rivers Euphrates and Tigris." See 2 Sam. viii. 1. and Ps. lxxii. 8.

Ver. 27—29. Also I will make him my first-born, &c.] I will deal with him as with an eldest son, to whom a double portion of honour and possessions is due; and advance him to greater dignity than any other prince in the world. This, with what follows in the two next verses, can properly and strictly be applied only to Christ; *the first-born of every creature*; the most eminent person that ever the world saw; and to whom *all power was given in heaven and earth*. Mat. xxviii. 18. Col. i. 15.

Ver. 35. Once have I sworn, &c.] *One thing I swear by my holiness; (I will not lie unto David:)* ver. 36. *His seed shall endure for ever, &c. ver. 37. As the moon, it shall be fixed firm for ever, and it shall be a faithful witness in heaven: i. e. "The moon shall be a faithful witness to this promise of " God,*

38 But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.

39 Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.

40 Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.

41 All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours.

42 Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.

43 Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.

44 Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.

45 The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.

46 How long, LORD! wilt thou hide thyself? for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?

47 Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?

48 What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.

49 LORD, where are thy former loving-kindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?

50 Remember, LORD, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people:

51 Wherewith thine enemies have re-

“ God, so long as it continues in the heavens.” See Mudge and Houbigant.

Ver. 38. *Thou hast been wroth with thine anointed*] One of the posterity of David, and his lawful successor in the kingdom. These verses are applicable to Zedekiah. See 2 Kings, xxiv. 20. xxv. 6, 7. and Lam. iv. 20.

Ver. 39. *Thou hast made void the covenant, &c.*] We may piously say, that it is not in God's power to break any promise he hath made, or for his word to fail in performing any good to mankind, which we have any warrant to expect from him: but we may lawfully believe, that it is in our own power to render all those promises ineffectual to us, and to drive those blessings from us, which he is willing to confer upon us. Let his gracious purposes be never so much declared on our behalf, it always supposes that we shall be willing to receive, as well as he to give; and that we will demean ourselves in such a manner, that neither his justice nor his honour shall suffer in his bounty towards us: but if we behave ourselves so wickedly, that his honour cannot subsist without our exemplary punishment, and we yet contemn with obstinacy and perverseness that chastisement which he inflicts, and raise the account of our iniquities higher than it was before he afflicted us; it is we who violate his promises, and not He; and we have sturdily resisted his good inclinations, and not suffered him to be propitious to us; and then he will wipe us out of his memory, and deface all those records which put him in mind of us, and of his gracious resolutions towards us. And if God hath cast off his own chosen people, and withdrawn his loving-kindness from them; if all the promises he made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and which he renewed and enlarged so solemnly to David, be cancelled, which we are not bound to believe, and may charitably and scripturally hope the contrary; I hope we may warrantably presume that this change in their fate, and their being left an out-cast nation, scattered over the face of the earth, hath proceeded from that cause, that they drove God from them before they were themselves driven

from their country, and because they have not yet a mind to return to him.

Ver. 40. *Thou hast broken down all his hedges*] *Thou hast broken all his fences or walls: thou hast made his strong-holds a ruin.* Mudge and Green. See Pf. lxxx. 12.

Ver. 45. *The days of his youth hast thou shortened*] Some understand this verse as relating to Jehoiachin, who in his youth was made a slave: (See 2 Kings xxiv. 8, &c.) and some to Zedekiah, who was condemned as a rebel to lose his eyes, and to remain a prisoner all his days: and thus the days, the prosperous days of them both, were shortened, and both of them were covered with shame.

Ver. 47. *Remember how short my time is*] *Remember, as to my own part, what my being is.* See Pf. xxxix. 4, Or, *Remember what my age is.* All men, in the next clause, means “all of us who labour under this wretched captivity.” *In vain*, signifies as if we were made for nothing else but to be miserable, and die. The Psalmist makes use of the next verse as an argument to incline God to suffer the captive Jews to spend the short time which remained of their lives in a more comfortable condition. *From the hand of the grave*, is rendered very properly by Mudge, *from the power of the grave.*

Ver. 50. *How I do bear in my bosom, &c.*] *How I bear in my bosom all wherewith mighty nations, ver. 51. Wherewith thine enemies, O Lord, reproach; wherewith they reproach the steps of thine anointed.* Mudge; who observes, that by this translation an elegant repetition of the sentence is made, as in the song of Deborah and other places. *The steps* may mean *the measures*, “Whatever thine anointed does, or wherever he goes, they set him at defiance; they speak ‘‘ opprobriously:’’ But perhaps it may be understood more simply, “They pursue the footsteps of thy anointed, ‘‘ wherever he treads, with defiance and opprobrious language.” The mention of himself here, and in the 47th verse, shews the author to be of consequence. According to the Chaldee, this means the slowness of the footsteps of the Messiah. The Jews were reproached by their enemies,

proached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.

52 Blessed be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

as if the promises upon which they so firmly depended, with relation to their Messiah, whom they expected to rescue and redeem them out of their captivity, had now utterly deceived them. See Houbigant.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Psalmist opens with praise, notwithstanding the desolations before him, which so deeply affected and afflicted him; for no troubles should untune our hearts: we can be in no state or condition, when we have not matter for a spiritual song; and shall get more ease of heart by praising than complaining.

1. The Psalmist declares his purpose to celebrate with ceaseless praise the mercies and faithfulness of the Lord. However dark the present providences of God appeared, he doubted not his boundless mercy, nor distrusted his faithfulness; and therefore not only his lips should praise, but he would make known God's mercy and truth, and leave them upon record to future generations.

2. He professes his own faith and hope in God. *For I have said*, confiding in God's promise, in opposition to all appearances, *Mercy shall be built up for ever*, the tabernacle of David be revived from its ruins, and flourish through God's mercy: *thy faithfulness shall thou establish in the very heavens*, his promises to the faithful enduring as the heavens, and his faithfulness most eminently proved, when his saints shall be taken up to heaven; and herein with unshaken confidence he rested.

2dly, The Psalmist reiterates the praises of God; and most worthy he appears to be adored, and had in everlasting remembrance.

1. Heaven and earth must celebrate his glory. *The heavens*, with all their bright inhabitants, *shall praise thy wonders*, or, *that wonderful work of thine*, the covenant of grace established in Christ with lost sinners, or that stupendous incarnation of the Son of God: *thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints*, earth as well as heaven unites in adoration, and saints seek to emulate the service of angels; and most especially bounden are they to join in the song of praise, when assembled in the great congregation, where God has promised the especial presence of his grace, and is to be approached with filial reverence and godly fear. *Note*; They who ever hope for heaven, must begin the service upon earth. If we have now no joy in God's worship and praises, how can we expect happiness there, where this is the everlasting employment of the glorified soul.

2. Most abundant reason there is, why God should be thus adored,

[1.] Because his greatness is beyond compare. Heaven yields none like him; the highest archangels are infinitely more beneath his perfection, than they are above the worm, the meanest worm which crawls: much less can earth, among its mightiest sons, produce a rival to Him who sitteth on the circle of the heavens, and the inhabitants of the world are but as grasshoppers before him.

[2.] His strength and faithfulness are most transcendently great. None can do what he doth, nor did ever any

trust him and were disappointed. Several instances of this his almighty power are here given:

(1.) In his controul of the most unruly elements, *Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them*: he hath appointed their bounds; and though the foaming billows lift their heads, they cannot pass them, but in an instant at his word subside, and creep in murmurs to the shore. By this act of omnipotence did Jesus manifest his godhead and glory. *Matt. viii. 24—27*:

(2.) In his victories over Egypt, and his people's enemies, when Pharaoh, that *Rahab, that proud one*, was destroyed, and all his hosts, as corpses, scattered on the shore; an emblem of the victories of Jesus over Satan and the powers of darkness, and of his destruction of the anti-christian foe, when Babylon mystical, as Rahab, shall be broken in pieces.

(3.) In his universal dominion over all the creatures. The heavens and earth, and all who dwell in them, own his authority, and regard him as their Creator: from pole to pole he is Lord of all, and *Tabor and Hermon rejoice in his name*, all the fertility, strength, and beauty they possess, are from his gift; and if Tabor, as is generally supposed, was the mount where our Lord was transfigured, it might with peculiar propriety be said to rejoice in him.

(4.) In his providential government. *Thou hast a mighty arm*, able to save and to destroy; *strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand*, to preserve, protect, and chastise his faithful people for their good; or to punish and overwhelm his enemies with judgments irresistible; and withal, most holy, just, and good are all his dispensations. *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne*, the administration of the kingdom of his providence is altogether righteous and equitable. *Mercy and truth shall go before thy face*; mercy in pardoning the perishing sinner, *truth* in performing all his promises; and justly do these exalt him, and render him worthy to receive blessing, and glory, and majesty, and might, and dominion, for ever and ever.

3dly, The blessedness of God's faithful people is here described; as there is no god like him, so no people so happy as those who know him, love him, and serve him faithfully.

1. *They know the joyful sound* of gospel grace, like the shout of a victorious army, *Numb. xxiii. 21.* or the welcome trump of jubilee, proclaiming victory over sin, death, and hell, and liberty from the bondage of corruption, and speaking pardon, peace, and reconciliation between the offended God and the sinful soul.

2. *They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance*, under the special tokens of his favour, enjoying the most endeared communion with him, and walking in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

3. Their joy shall be permanent. *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day*, every day they will have cause to do so, in further and clearer manifestations of the divine grace and love; and in the darkest hour, still they may find matter for a spiritual song.

4. Their exultation will be great; endued with divine strength, which will make them more than conquerors
over

P S A L. XC.

Moses, setting forth God's providence, complaineth of human fragility, divine chastisements, and brevity of life: he prayeth for the knowledge and sensible experience of God's good providence.

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

over all the enemies of their souls; they will appear glorious in the eyes of God, in that beauty and comeliness which he hath put upon them.

5. Their relation to God makes them both safe and honourable. *For the Lord is our defence, or shield, to protect and defend us from every evil; and the Holy One of Israel is our king, to rule and guide us in the paths of peace under his happy sway.* Blessed, for ever blessed, are the people who are in such a case!

4thly, The covenant that God had made with David is here enlarged upon, as a ground of comfort in the present low estate of the royal family. And herein especial relation is had to Christ, and his church, to whom alone the things here mentioned are entirely applicable. We have,

1. The glorious personage pointed out. *Then thou speakst in vision to thy holy one, to Samuel, who was appointed to anoint David king, 1 Sam. xvi. 1., or Nathan, 2 Sam. vii. 4, &c. or concerning thy Holy One, the Messiah, to whom gave all the prophets witness; and to him most emphatically belongs the character here described: The Mighty One, able to save to the uttermost, chosen out of the people, God's elect, in whom his soul delighteth; one in our nature, singled out to be united to the eternal Word, and make one Christ: Found and provided of God, anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, for the discharge of all his offices of prophet, priest, and king: Help laid upon him, that he might be fully qualified for the arduous work of the salvation of the faithful into the whole image of God from the depths of wretchedness and weakness into which mankind are fallen; God's servant willingly undertaking the business assigned him, and exalted by him to the highest place of honour and dignity at his right hand, in our nature, all power being committed to him in heaven and in earth, and angels, principalities, and powers made subject unto him.*

2. The great and precious promises made to this mighty and exalted Messiah.

[1.] For himself God promises, (1.) That in all his undertakings he shall be supported with the arm of Omnipotence; enabled to encounter and overcome all difficulties; be ready armed against every temptation, and unmoved under every assault. (2.) He shall be made victorious over his enemies. Satan, with all his wiles, shall not prevail, nor be able to exact upon him more than as the sinner's surety he undertook to bear. God will beat down all his foes before him, whether the powers of darkness, or the Jewish people who conspired against him, or the antichristian oppressors of his people: all who hate him

must be confounded at his feet; bow down, and feel his iron rod breaking them in pieces as a potter's vessel, and dooming them to the everlasting burnings, the just punishment of their sins. *Note; The end of all the enemies of the Redeemer and his people is, to perish for ever. (3.) God will never fail him in his undertaking. My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: all the promises shall be made good to him, and all the blessings engaged for in the covenant of grace be lodged in his hands for his faithful people's use and benefit; so that out of his fulness we may all receive, and find all the promises of God in him, yea, and Amen. (4.) He shall be advanced to great honour and extensive dominion. In my name shall his horn be exalted, high in power and glory: I will set his hand in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers: both continent and islands, sea and rivers, with all that dwell in them, and occupy their business there, shall own his sway, and submit to his government. (5.) He shall be owned of God as his Son, as his first-born, and enjoy the blessings of that endeared relation. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, by eternal generation, as he is very God of very God; or rather as Mediator, for whom a body was prepared, when in the fulness of time it was fulfilled, This day have I begotten thee, Psal. ii. 7. My God, whose power and protection were engaged for him and over him, John, xx. 17. and the rock of my salvation, to carry him through his arduous undertaking, and enable him to accomplish it for his own and his faithful people's glory. Also I will make him my first-born, the most eminent and exalted in the human nature of all the sons of God, he having in all things the pre-eminence, higher than the kings of the earth, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, Rev. xix. 16. His throne exalted over all, and that for ever and ever, for his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.*

[2.] For his faithful followers, God promises, in general, that his seed shall endure for ever, which cannot well be applied to David and his posterity, which, though the throne long continued in his family, are now no more upon it, unless considered as still subsisting in the Messiah, whose throne is established for ever. But it most properly belongs to faithful believers, the spiritual seed of Christ, who shall have a people, to the praise of the glory of his grace, while sun and moon endureth; and, when these luminaries are extinguished, shall still reign over his faithful people through all the ages of eternity.

P S A L. XC.

Title. תפלה לכשה אים האלהים tephillah lemosheb iif baalohim.] Mr. Peters is of opinion, that both this and the following

5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

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

wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger; even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

13 Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

following psalm were composed by Moses, for the instruction and consolation of the people in the wilderness; and the present chiefly for the use of those whose lot was to die there, as will appear more fully from the subsequent notes. The Chaldee title asserts, that it was composed by Moses, when the people tempted God in the wilderness. This begins the fourth Book of the Psalms.

Ver. 3. *Thou turnest man to destruction*] The sacred writer first puts the people in mind of the eternity of God, the never-failing refuge of his faithful servants in all ages; and this in a very noble strain of poetry: after which it follows in this verse, *Thou wilt turn man*: [Heb. *תשוב אנשי ער דבא* *tasheb enosh ad dakkaa*. *Make him return to the small dust*;] and thou wilt say, *Return, ye sons of men*. This is literally the translation, and the sense seems plain and clear: "Though mortal man must at thy command return to the earth, out of which he was formed, nay, even to dust; yet at thy command he shall again revive. Thou wilt say, Return, ye sons of Adam." This sense is further confirmed by what follows, ver. 4. *For a thousand years in thy sight, are but as yesterday; for it will pass; or, as a watch in the night; a still shorter space of time: plainly intimating, that, though the future resurrection might be at a thousand or ten thousand years distance, yet this was nothing, compared with the eternity of God. St. Peter, using the like phrase, and upon a like occasion, tells us, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, 2 Pet. iii. 8. See Peters.*

Ver. 5. *Thou carriest them away as with a flood*] Agreeable to the ideas in the foregoing verses, death is here considered as a sort of sleep; from whence they should awake in the morning, fresh and flourishing as an herb: and I think we have this image of a resurrection exhibited to us more than once in the prophets. *Thou sweepest them away as with a flood; they shall be as a sleep: in the morning they shall be as the herb which renews itself*. In this sense the verb *חלף* *chalaf*, is used here, and so in the following verse, where there is a turn of thought and expression very remarkable and poetical. For the sacred writer, from giving them this glimpse of their future resurrection and renovation, returns to take a view of their present dying and distressful condition; and this in the same metaphor, and with a repetition which is very beautiful: a repetition, I mean, of the delightful part of the contemplation; (for we love to dwell

upon what is pleasing to us;) but followed with a reflection sad and gloomy. "Yes," says he, "in the morning it flourishes and renews itself; at evening it is down, and dried up; and this last,—as he goes on,—is a just image of our present case. The evening of our life comes on apace; for we are consumed by thine anger," &c. ver. 7—10. Ver. 9. *We spend our years as a tale that is told*] Or, *We end our years as a thought*.

Ver. 10. *The days of our years are, &c.*] If this may be thought too short a term for the general standard of human life in those early ages, as one would infer from hence that Moses could not be the author of this psalm, yet it suits well with the particular case of the Israelites in the wilderness, whose lives were shortened by an express decree, so that a great number of them could not possibly reach the age of seventy; and those who did, probably, soon felt a swift decay.

Ver. 11. *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? &c.*] i. e. "In proportion to the fear and reverence which is due to thee, as the great Lord and Sovereign of the world; so may the transgressors of thy law expect their punishment." Something seems here intimated beyond the punishments of this world; for these are what men feel and experience. But who knows the dreadful punishments of a future? Well therefore is this reflection followed by a devout prayer, ver. 12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*! meaning, no doubt, that wisdom, which alone is such, in the sense of Holy Scripture, the *fearing God, and keeping his commandments*; that so, by making a right use of this short, uncertain space of time allotted to us here, we may through grace prepare ourselves the better for a future state. The following verses to the end are equally suitable to the condition of the persons for whom they were intended. It evidently appears from what has been said, that the Israelites in the wilderness, when cut off from all hopes of an earthly Canaan, and the promises of this life, were not left destitute of better hopes, or without the knowledge of a Redeemer, and a life to come; and that God's leading them through this *great and terrible wilderness*, to humble them, and to *prove them, that he might do them good* (as he says himself) in their *אחרית* *Acharith*, must be understood, according to the most natural sense of the word, in their *future state*.

Ver. 13. *Return, O Lord! how long*] *Return, O Lord! how*

14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy: that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.

16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

PSAL. XCI.

The state of the godly: their safety: their habitations their servants: their friend; with the effects of them all.

HE that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.

7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

how long [will it be first]? Mudge: giving rather the meaning, than the emphatical energy of the original; which is best expressed by the abruptness of our version.

Ver. 17. And let the beauty, &c.] Let the countenance of the Lord our God smile upon me; and prosper thou the work of our hands. Green. Bishop Hare and Houbigant have observed, that the four words at the end of the verse, which are here left untranslated, are only a repetition of the foregoing words; which neither the Vatican copy of the LXX acknowledges, nor the metre admits.

REFLECTIONS.—This psalm opens,

1. With an acknowledgment of God's goodness to his people. *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.* From the days that Abraham first at his command left his native land, God had provided for him and his seed, and made them to dwell in safety. Christ our Lord is every believer's rest: in him by faith we dwell; safe under the covert of the wings of his love we abide, protected from every storm.

2. He adores God as the everlasting Jehovah, the consideration of whose eternity administers the greatest consolation to his faithful people; for whatever they meet with of disappointment or misery in this transitory and perishing world, they have in him an ever-living God, a never-failing portion; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

3. He owns the disproportion between the eternal God and the longest-lived of all the sons of men. All comparison fails between finite and infinite, between time and eternity: all the events of time are equally present with God; so that respecting the coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the body, the length of time they may be deferred, is not the least objection to either.

4. He describes the frailty of man even in his best estate; *Thou carriest them away as with a flood, swiftly, suddenly, irresistibly, as in the deluge, they are as a sleep, their*

life insensibly spent, and at best to the sinner but a pleasing dream, which at death vanishes: *in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning of youth it flourisheth, and groweth up; beauty, vigour, wealth, prosperity make them appear like the verdant field, but momentary is the joy: in the evening it is cut down and withereth, the beauty fades, the strength fails, the possessions vanish; when death, the mower, puts in the sickle, and under disease, or age, the enfeebled body bends to the tomb. Note: (1.) The vanity of earthly enjoyments, and the folly of seeking happiness in things so fleeting and unsatisfactory. Shall we exchange an eternity of blessedness for the pleasures of a dream? (2.) They who look often in their glass, should look oftener into their coffin; this will check the pride of beauty. (3.) If our hour is so short, it becomes us to improve it as it flies, and not dream our life away, lest Death awaken us at last in terrible surprise, instead of finding us watching, and prepared for his summons.*

PSAL. XCI.

THIS psalm has no title, and therefore is likely to be by the same author with the foregoing; but this is still more probable from the subject of it: for as the 90th psalm appears calculated for the use of those who were to die in the wilderness, so the present seems evidently designed for those who were to survive this threatened devastation, and whom therefore he arms against the fear of death, by a religious trust in God; with the promise of a miraculous protection to such as trusted in him. Both psalms seem to have been composed soon after the irrevocable decree was passed, Numb. xiv. which condemned one part of them, all who were numbered from twenty years old and upwards, to a lingering death in the wilderness, and their little ones to a forty years wandering for their fathers' sins; but with a gracious promise, however, that they should at length obtain an entrance into the land of Canaan. Both

D d

forts.

9 Because thou hast made the LORD *which* is my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation ;

10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and

adder : the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him : I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him : I *will be* with him in trouble ; I will deliver him and honour him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

forts, therefore, stood in need of support and consolation, though of a different kind ; and we find it given them in these two psalms. The younger fort are thus instructed and encouraged : *He that dwelleth, &c.* ver. 1—4. Peters.

Ver. 4. His truth] Meaning, no doubt, that gracious promise, Numb. xiv. 31. *But your little ones, which you said should be a prey, them will I bring in ; and they shall know the land which ye have despised ;* whereas of the others their doom is repeated in the following verse : *Your carcases shall fall in the wilderness.*

Ver. 5—8. Thou shalt not be afraid] The younger ones were to rest secure in the divine promise for protection. Amid the daily spectacles of mortality to which they were soon to be accustomed, it is added, ver. 8. *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, &c.* i. e. “Thou shalt only have the “discomfort of seeing those who may be dear to thee fall “by their own guilt, and the just sentence passed upon “them for their wicked murmurings and disobedience.”

Ver. 11—13. He shall give his angels charge, &c.] These verses point out still more plainly the occasion of this psalm. For as the people were not only exposed to diseases in the wilderness, but also to the incursions of wild beasts, and particularly the venomous bite of serpents, he tells them, that God would protect them from all these dangers, by giving his angels charge over them, to keep them in all their ways ; and ver. 13. *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, &c.* There is something so particular in this, that it will suit no other part of history beside that to which we suppose it to refer. For the wilderness in which they were condemned to wander abounded with those noxious creatures, as we learn from Deut. viii. 15. and yet we do not read that the Israelites were infested by them, till towards the end of their forty years' wandering, when God was pleased, for the renewed murmurings of that people, to let them loose upon them to chastise them ; and even then, immediately upon their humiliation, a miraculous remedy was provided, which deserves our notice. It was a *serpent of brass*, by the express order of God fixed upon a pole or standard : and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived. See Numb. xxi. 5—9. This brazen serpent was doubtless designed to call to their remembrance the great object of their faith and hope from the fall ; the promised victory over the old serpent, through that Seed of the woman who was destined to bruise his head : nor can we have a better comment on the Mosaic symbol, than the words of our Lord himself, John, iii. 14. compared with John, xii. 32. See also Heb.

ii. 14. ; Rev. xii. 9., and Isai. xi. 10. By comparing these texts together you will observe the harmony of Scripture, and how naturally the words of our Blessed Lord and his apostles point us through the prophecy of Isaiah, and the brazen serpent of Moses, back to the first notice of a Redeemer given to mankind, in that well-known sentence ; Gen. iii. 15. or the first link of that chain of prophecy which runs throughout the Old Testament, and has its completion in the New. I shall not lay any stress upon that assertion of Justin Martyr, that the *DJ nes*, or *standard*, upon which this brazen serpent hung, bore the figure of a cross : it is sufficient to our purpose, if this serpent, erected as a trophy, was considered by them as an emblem of the victory to be obtained over the old serpent by the promised Seed ; whether they had any explicit knowledge of the means whereby this victory was to be obtained, or not : for in this view it presented to the minds of the faithful the hopes of a deliverance from death, in a higher sense than a present cure of the bite of these venomous creatures imported ; and it is no improbable supposition, that a belief of the one was made the condition of the other. Whether they who looked at the brazen serpent were directed at the same time to repeat the psalm before us, I know not ; but this I am sure of, that it affords a meditation highly suitable to the occasion. A religious trust in God is what we see inculcated throughout ; and that remarkable sentence, ver. 13. *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet*, (especially if, as Bochart seems to have proved, these are only names of serpents of different sorts, and should be rendered, *the viper and the asp—the serpent and the dragon*.) is only saying in other words, *Thou shalt bruise the serpent's head* : and if an act of faith in that great Person who was to do this for them be here supposed and implied, then it would be easy and natural to interpret the following verses of this psalm in a sense of faith likewise, and as pointing out to them in no obscure terms,—I might say, perhaps, in very magnificent terms,—the gospel life and salvation. Peters. We shall enlarge further on this subject, when we come to Matt. iv. 6.

Ver. 16. With long life will I satisfy, &c.] If we can doubt what is here meant by *long life*, we may find it well explained to us, Pf. xxi. 4. *He asked life of thee, and thou gavest him a long life, even for ever and ever.* As for the term *salvation*, let us hear Le Clerc's comment upon the place : “If you interpret this (says he,) in the Christian way, it will be *eternal salvation* ;” but then he adds, “But it should first be shewn, that this *salvation* was “clearly

P S A L. XCII.

The prophet exhorteth to praise God, for his great works, for his judgments on the wicked, and for his goodness to the godly.

A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-day.

IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:

“clearly revealed, before it be looked for in an ambiguous place, or text.” If we can shew, then, that this *salvation* was revealed from the beginning; or that God’s faithful people, all along from the fall, expected some great Person through whom they should at length obtain a conquest over death, then the words *life* and *salvation* in the Old Testament will be no longer ambiguous; or, at least, may very naturally be understood of a *future life and salvation* when the context favours such an interpretation. In short, every prophecy of our Saviour, which was understood by the Israelites, (and it is strange if they should not understand some of them, else where was their high privilege in having the oracles of God committed to them? Rom. ãiii. 2.) was to them an intimation of another life; as, on the other hand, the express notices of another life to be met with in the Old Testament, are a confirmation of the prophecies; so that they lend a mutual assistance to each other. I have dwelt the longer upon this subject, as being willing to assign to its proper author this noble remain of the Jewish lawgiver and historian, in itself so excellent and worthy of him; and so exactly suiting the time and occasion that I have mentioned, and no other. See Peters, p. 306.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Scripture abounds with great and precious promises, and God’s faithful people, who come to these sacred fountains, may ever draw waters of comfort.

1. The Psalmist describes the safety and consolation of the faithful soul. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, delights in his worship, and seeks repose for his soul in the bosom of his grace, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty, sheltered from every danger by Almighty power, and comforted with a sense of divine love.*

2. He professes his purpose to fly to this blest hiding-place. *I will say of, or to the Lord, He is my refuge in every time of danger, my fortress, impregnable to the assaults of every enemy, spiritual or temporal, my God, in whose regard, by faith, I claim an interest; in him will I trust, confident of his protection, and expecting all felicity from his power, grace, and faithfulness, according to his promises.* *Note;* They who make God their only trust, will never be disappointed of their hope.

3. He instances a great variety of particulars, wherein God’s care of his faithful people would appear. *Surely he will deliver thee from every evil and danger, temporal or spiritual.*

(1.) *From the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence, either literally from those who lie in wait to destroy our bodies, and from the pestilential diseases which en-*

2 *To shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,*

3 *Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.*

4 *For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*

danger our lives, or, from the snares and temptations which Satan lays for our souls; from that most pestilential of all diseases, sin, and that worst of plagues, the plague of our own hearts. *Note;* How often may every man reflect on seasons of danger, when he owed the preservation of his life purely to the divine providence?

(2.) *He shall cover thee with his feathers, expressive of God’s tender regard towards his faithful people, as a hen covereth her chickens, calling them when danger threatens, protecting and cherishing them under her wings. His faithfulness and truth, whereon the believer’s confidence is placed, shall be thy shield and buckler; his promises engaged for him, his power almighty to defend him.* *Note;* Though we are weak and helpless, our God is able to save to the uttermost; blessed and happy are they whom he covers with his wings and shield!

(3.) *No fear shall dismay. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, from fire, storm, robbers, or spirits of darkness who would in frightful dreams disturb the mind, or inject distrustful fears of God’s care and protection: nor for the arrow that flieth by day; the sudden and unexpected judgments of God: nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, when the dead are carried forth to their graves; or, as arising from hidden causes, and stalking terrible through the land: nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day, when the heat causeth the pestilential vapour to be more fatal; or respect may be had to that suffocating wind, which, in some Eastern countries, kills those who are exposed to it: none of these shall terrify the faithful; God can preserve him from death, or make him triumphant over it; so that he shall never know that fear which hath torment.* *Note;* (1.) If we lie down in peace, and sleep undisturbed, if we awake refreshed, and pass the day in safety amid the unnumbered dangers which surround our path, God’s hand is to be thankfully acknowledged. (2.) Faith in God delivers from terrifying fear; and even death, to the faithful believer, has lost its sting.

(4.) *In general desolations the faithful shall be safe. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; such dreadful havoc does the plague often make; but it shall not come nigh thee; either a particular providence shall guard their houses, as when the destroying angel passed through Egypt; or at least they shall not be hurt by it if they fall, for to them death is gain. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the wicked, in whose destruction God is glorified; and in his righteous judgments his people rejoice, and adore him.*

2dly, We have here many more rich promises of God declared, and the character of his faithful people described, to whom they belong.

1. Their character. [1.] They make the Lord their re-
D d 2 fuge,

5 O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

6 A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.

7 When the wicked spring as the grass, and

when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.

8 But thou, LORD, art most high for evermore.

9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo,

fuge, trusting in him in every time of trial. [2.] The most High is their *habitation*, where their souls find sweet repose, and a comfortable provision of all good things. [3.] *They sit their love on God*, he is the grand object of it, and reigns in their hearts without a rival. [4.] *They know his name*; are acquainted with his word, where he has made the most glorious displays of his perfections; and with his Son the brightness of his glory, by whom alone the Father can be truly known, Matt. xi. 27. [5.] They call upon him in ceaseless prayer for the relief of all their wants, and testify their continual dependance on his protection and care. Reader, is this thy character? then blessed art thou. For,

2. Great are the promised blessings which the Psalmist, in God's name, yea, which God himself, pronounces on all such.

(1.) *No evil shall befall thee, nor any plague come nigh thy dwelling*; either God will, by a distinguishing act of his providence, protect them; or, whatever trouble comes, it shall be sanctified, in the issue produce their greatest good, and prove a real blessing in disguise.

(2.) Angelic guards shall attend their steps; they minister to the heirs of salvation, and from unforeseen danger preserve and protect them with the most condescending tenderness, and with mighty power. Satan applied this passage to Christ, but with the omission of a material clause: *they shall keep thee in all thy ways*, into which by Divine Providence thou art led, or by the Divine Word directed; for out of the path of duty we may not expect the way of safety.

(3.) The powers of darkness shall be subdued under them. *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder*; literally, these noxious animals being restrained from hurting; or, figuratively, wicked men and wicked devils, for power and subtilty compared to these, shall be trodden down: *the young lion and dragon shalt thou trample under feet*, even Satan, whose head shall shortly be bruised under the feet of God's faithful people.

(4.) God himself promises, *in trouble to be with them, and out of trouble to deliver them*. Trouble we may expect, it is part of the lot of God's people; but his presence and a sense of his love overbalance every affliction; and living and dying he will deliver his faithful ones from their trials, either by giving them strength to support and overcome them, or by discharging them from the warfare, and admitting them to his eternal rest.

(5.) He will hear all their prayers, and give them answers of peace. He gives the spirit of supplication; and when that spirit is put forth in prayer, he grants the requests which the believer makes in the way which is most for his good; for the prayer of faith never returned empty.

(6.) He engages to set them *on high*, on the rock Christ, against which all storms and tempests rage in vain, and

from whence they can look down on all the impotent malice of their foes; and to *honour* them, not only with justifying faith, with the title of his sons or daughters, and the graces of his Spirit here below, but with an inheritance eternal in the heavens, and with a throne of glory everlasting.

(7.) *With long life will I satisfy him*; they shall live here as long as God has work for them to do; and *show him my salvation*, the fulness of it above, when all the unutterable blessedness which the Lord Jesus hath purchased shall fully, freely, and eternally be bestowed on the faithful soul, and he shall be for ever satisfied with it.

P S A L. XCII.

Title. מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת *mizmor shiir leiom hashabbath.*] This psalm was used by the Jews in their public services on the Sabbath-day. The rabbis pretend that it was written by Adam. But as the instruments of music here mentioned were not used in the worship of God till David's time, it is most probable that it was composed by him; and that not so much to commemorate the creation, and the Sabbath which followed it, as to foretel that rest from persecution which God had promised to give his church under the Messiah. See Dr. Hammond. Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that this psalm was written in the interval between the first Philistine defeat, and their second invasion, (see book ii. chap. 9.) upon their confederating anew, and gathering together to a second attempt against him. "To this, (says he,) I apprehend, refer those words in the 7th verse, *When the wicked spring up as grass. He had just mowed down his enemies, and they were now springing up again, like a new crop of grass from a rich field; but, how flourishing soever these workers of iniquity were, David fully confided that they should soon be destroyed for ever. The glory of sinners is, at best, but the flower of a withering grass: But the righteous (ver. 12.) shall flourish like a palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon; which, at the same time that it enlarges upon earth, rises towards heaven.*"

Ver. 3. Upon the harp with a solemn sound] In a soft whisper upon the harp. Mudge; who observes, that the word everywhere signifies a soft sound of some kind or other.

Ver. 5. And thy thoughts are very deep] *How deep are thy designs!* Green.

Ver. 6, 7. A brutish man, &c.] *The foolish man doth not observe, nor the thoughtless man take notice of this: ver. 7. That when the wicked spring up like the grass, and all the practitioners of idolatry flourish, it is that they may be destroyed for ever.* See Green and Mudge. It is clear to a demonstration from these verses, that this psalm could not have been composed by Adam.

Ver. 8, 9. But thou, Lord, &c.] *But thou, O Lord, dwellest on high for evermore; ver. 9. While, behold, thine enemies perish,*

thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like *the horn of an unicorn*: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

11 Mine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear *my desire* of the wicked that rise up against me.

12 The righteous shall flourish like the

palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

15 To shew that the LORD is upright: *he is my rock*, and *there is no unrighteousness in him*.

perish, and all the practisers of idolatry are scattered abroad. Green and Mudge. The phrase of God's dwelling or sitting on *high*, is equivalent to God's sitting in heaven, and there over-ruling all the designs of men to his own glory, and the good of his servants.

Ver. 10. *But my horn shalt thou exalt, &c.*] *But thou exaltest my horn, like the horn of the oryx; my old age is fresh invigorated with oil.* I translate בָּרְחֵבִי *ballothi*, with the LXX, by *old age, or decay*; as the very same letters are used by Sarah in this sense, and the word is more familiar, and the image the same with that in ver. 14. Mudge.

Ver. 11. *Mine eye, &c.*] *Mine eye also shall look upon mine enemies; and mine ears shall hear the wicked, &c.*

Ver. 12. *The righteous shall flourish, &c.*] The flourishing state of the righteous in this verse, is beautifully opposed to that of the wicked, ver. 7. For of these it is intimated, that their prosperity should be momentary, trifling, and perpetually decaying: but the prosperity of the righteous shall be well-founded, durable, and continually increasing. When *the wicked flourish*, it is only said of them, that they are *green as the grass*; of which our Saviour says, *To-day it is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.* But *the righteous flourish like a palm-tree*, and *spread abroad their boughs like a cedar in Lebanon.* The better to illustrate the force of this comparison, I shall add Mr. Maundrell's account of the cedars of Libanus, who paid them a visit in the month of May 1697. "These noble trees grow among the snow near the highest part of Lebanon; and are remarkable, as well for their old age and largeness, as for those frequent allusions made to them in the word of God. Here are some of them very old, and of a prodigious bulk; and others younger, of a smaller size. Of the former I could reckon up only sixteen; and the latter are very numerous. I measured one of the largest, and found it twelve yards six inches in girth, and yet found; and thirty-seven yards in the spread of its boughs. At about five or six yards from the ground it was divided into five limbs; each of which was equal to a great tree." This account adds a beauty to that passage, Ps. civ. 16. where God is said to have *planted the cedars of Lebanon.* See Travels, p. 142.

REFLECTIONS.—1st,

1. The Psalmist encourages us to join heartily in the sacred song. *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High*; it is both our duty and privilege, the tribute of gratitude we owe, and the preparation for the service of heaven; and abundant matter we have for the blessed service, to *shew forth thy*

loving-kindness in the morning, the various instances of it that we have experienced in providential care, and especially in the spiritual blessings obtained by Christ Jesus, and *thy faithfulness every night*; not merely confining our grateful acknowledgment to one day, but day and night continually, as most bounden, ascribing to God the glory due unto his name, whose mercy and truth never fail. *Notes.* (1.) Whatever our engagements may be, we are bound at least to begin and end each day with prayer and praise. (2.) They who have themselves a deep experience of the divine love and faithfulness, will delight to be telling of his salvation from day to day.

2. He sets before us his own example for our imitation. *Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work*; the works of creation and providence, or rather of redemption and grace by Jesus Christ: an experimental knowledge of which is matter of the most enlivening joy: *I will triumph in the works of thy hands.* O Lord, how great are thy works! when we contemplate the works of creation, providence, redemption, and grace, we are lost in admiration, and can only wonder and adore; and *thy thoughts are very deep*, unfathomable by the shallow line of human reason, and above our conception as the heaven is higher than the earth.

3. They who disregard the works of God, and neglect to praise him, are brutish and wicked. *A brutish man knoweth not: neither doth a fool understand this*; by the indulgence of their appetites they degrade themselves into beasts; and, brutish in their knowledge, looking no higher than the earth, nor farther than the grave, they leave God far above out of their sight, insensible of all his mercies, and negligent of his service.

2dly, The Psalmist triumphs over his enemies, and in God's love and favour to himself and all his faithful ones.

1. He expects to see the ruin of the wicked, however prosperous and proud. *When the wicked spring as the grass, so numerous and vigorous, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, in health, wealth, power, and every earthly possession, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever*: their prosperity becomes their ruin, and they are only fattened for the slaughter. *But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore*, reigning over all, abasing the proud, and ever living to inflict on them their deserved punishment. *For lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for lo, thine enemies shall perish*; for such are all the workers of wickedness, who daringly oppose the most High, reject his government, and rebel against his crown and dignity; but vain their impotent malice, they must perish under his eternal wrath; and all

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P S A L. XCIII.

The majesty, power, and holiness of Christ's kingdom.

THE LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength *wherewith* he hath girded himself: the world also is established that it cannot be moved.

2 Thy throne *is* established of old: thou

the workers of iniquity shall be scattered, their schemes frustrated, their combinations broken, their ruin irrecoverable and everlasting, when God shall say unto them, Depart, ye cursed, &c. But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn, establishing his royal authority, and exalting his throne on high. This may be applied to the Messiah, who is the horn of salvation, raised up from the house of David, Luke, i. 69. And thus also will all the faithful at the last day be set above their enemies. I shall be anointed with fresh oil; every attack of his foes should only serve to bring renewed supplies of grace, strength, and divine consolations into his soul. Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies: and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me, whose power to hurt shall be broken, and God glorified in their punishment. Note; (1.) All the enemies of Christ and his people rage in vain; they who will not submit to his government, must perish together and for ever under his vengeance. (2.) Though we may not wish evil to our bitterest enemies through any private revenge, we cannot but desire to see the power of the wicked restrained, and God's glory manifested in his righteous judgments.

2. He expects to see the exaltation of the saints of God, however now depressed and low. *The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; whatever burdens are laid on him, he shall not only be enabled to support them, but prosper in his soul under the load. Crescit sub pondere virtus. He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon, strong and high, reaching to the heavens, and unmoved by stormy blasts. Such is the faithful believer, going from strength to strength, having his affections set on heaven and heavenly things, and rooted in Christ. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, removed from the wilderness of the world, grafted into Christ, and thus transplanted into his church, where they partake of the heavenly dew of divine benediction, and in the word and ordinances are watered day by day, these shall flourish in the courts of our God, being full of sap derived from Christ the living root, and adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. They shall bring forth fruit in old age, grace being often most vigorous and fruitful when nature's strength decays: they shall be fat and flourishing, partaking of the fatness of the root Rom. xi. 17. walking in the most enlivened exercise of divine grace, and abounding in every good work: To shew that the Lord is upright, true to all his promises, carrying his faithful people on to hoary hairs and to eternal glory. He is my rock, firm and stable; such the Psalmist had by experience proved him to be, and so will every soul that perseveringly trusts upon him; and there is no unrighteousness*

art from everlasting.

3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.

4 The LORD on high *is* mightier than the noise of many waters, *yea, than* the mighty waves of the sea.

5 Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.

in him; he never raises expectations to disappoint them, what he promises he fully performs; and fails not to punish the workers of iniquity, for just and right is he.

P S A L. XCIII.

THIS psalm has no title in the Hebrew; but it is supposed to be David's, to whom it is attributed by the LXX, and most of the ancient versions. It was used by the Jews in their public worship on the day before the Sabbath; and by their interpretation, this and all the psalms to the 100th, are to be understood in their sublimest sense, of the kingdom of Christ.

Ver. 1. The Lord reigneth] It was the Psalmist's glory and confidence, that though the nations boasted of the power and splendor of their kings, and trusted to their military preparations, yet *the Lord, the great Jehovah, the God of Israel, still reigned.* God is here very elegantly represented as *clothed with majesty itself*, as kings are with their royal ornaments; and as girded with almighty strength, as warriors are with the sword: some render the verse thus, *The Lord reigneth; he is robed with majesty: The Lord is robed; he is girded with strength, &c.*

Ver. 3. The floods have lifted up, O Lord] Instead of *waves* at the end of the verse, some translators read *roar*, which is equivalent to *voice*. The meaning of the verse is, "Multitudes of combined enemies threaten to break in upon us, like a flood."

Ver. 4. The Lord on high, &c.] See Chandler's Life of David, vol. i. p. 104.

Ver. 5. Thy testimonies are very sure] Here, as in Pf. xix. the laws of nature and God's word are considered as laws of the same hand, and having the same promises; עֲדֹתָי *eidotheka*, comprehends both. He adds, *Holiness becometh thine house: i. e. "Thou canst as soon renounce thy holiness, as thy faithfulness in performing thy promises. "It is the ornament and glory of thy house for ever."*

REFLECTIONS.—The sovereign dominion, the glorious and eternal kingdom of Jesus, Jehovah, God over all, blessed for ever, is a subject of pleasing meditation to the believing soul.

1. He reigns in majesty and power. *The Lord reigneth;* all power in heaven and earth is given to the Lord Christ; his kingdom of grace is set up in the hearts of his believing people, and his throne in glory is prepared, where he shall reign over his faithful ones for ever and ever; *he is clothed with majesty;* compared with which, all the glory of earthly monarchs vanishes as the light of the glow-worm before the meridian sun; *the Lord is clothed with strength wherewith*

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P S A L. XCIV.

The prophet, calling for justice, complaineth of tyranny and impiety: he teacheth God's providence: he sheweth the blessedness of affliction. God is the defender of the afflicted.

O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

2 Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.

3 LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?

4 *How long* shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?

5 They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage.

6 They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.

he hath girded himself, needing no support but from his own almighty arm, doing whatsoever pleaseth him among the hosts of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, and able to bear down all opposition which can be raised against his kingdom and people in an instant: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved; he upholdeth all things which he created, and especially his church and faithful people. Note, The more we look to the Lord Jesus Christ, clothed with majesty and power, the less shall we fear worms of the earth.

2. He reigns from everlasting to everlasting. Of old, even from eternity, his throne is established: *thou art from everlasting, the eternal God, and therefore the everlasting King; of whose government there will be no end.*

3. He reigns unmoved by all the opposition of his enemies. Though angels in heaven dared to rebel, and men and devils join on earth to destroy his kingdom, and, like roaring waves of the sea, lift up themselves to overwhelm his people, their rage is impotent and vain. *The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters; and as of old he cast from their shining thrones the angels which sinned, so will he destroy all the principalities and powers of earth leagued against his people, will silence their tumult, and keep his faithful ones in perfect peace, whose minds are stayed on him. Note; In all our frights and fears, if we look up with an eye of faith, our tempestuous souls will soon be calmed, and Jesus will say to every storm, "Peace, be still."*

4. He reigns in righteousness. *Thy testimonies are very sure; all his promises inviolably faithful, and we may confidently trust him for support and salvation; only let it be our care to walk agreeable to our glorious hope, since, holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever. This is the great ornament of the church of Christ on earth; and while every faithful member of Jesus seeks to grow in grace below, it is his joy and happiness, that a never-fading*

7 Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.

8 Understand, ye brutish among the people: and, ye fools, when will ye be wise?

9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?

10 He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge shall not be know?

11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.

12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.

14 For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.

crown and the full enjoyment of God for ever form the glorious prospect before him.

P S A L. XCIV.

THE later Greeks ascribe this psalm to David; and indeed it is an exact description of the courtiers of Saul; who abused their authority to all manner of oppression and violence, especially against David, without any fear of God, or thoughts that he would call them to any account; as he complains in several other psalms, particularly the 57th, 58th, and 59th. Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that this psalm was composed by David on account of the battle fought between the Israelites and the allied armies of the Ammonites and Syrians, 2 Sam. x. 1 Chron. xix.; and he thinks that the 5th and 6th verses particularly refer to the outrages which they committed, in wasting his country, and murdering his subjects. Life of David, book iii. chap. 6. See on ver. 17.

Ver. 8. Ye brutish—and ye fools] Ye foolish,—Ye thoughtless. Grotius observes on the next verse, that this is a most excellent way of arguing; for, whatever perfection there is in created beings, it is derived from God, and therefore must be in him in the most eminent manner.

Ver. 10. He that chastiseth the heathen, &c.] Or, He who instructs the nations, he who teacheth man knowledge, shall not be rebuke? Mudge renders this and the following verse thus: He that instructeth the nations, shall not he find them out? He that teacheth man knowledge, (ver. 11.) The Lord knoweth the devices of man, &c. "He who instructeth the nations, and supplieth them with all the knowledge they have, can he want means of discovering what they are about, and of finding them out? Will not he be able to trace them out in all their machinations? Yes; he that teacheth man knowledge, knoweth, &c."

Ver. 12. Blessed is the man] How happy the man whom thou instructest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy law, (ver. 13.)

15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.

16 Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?

17 Unless the LORD *had been* my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.

18 When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.

19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.

20 Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?

21 They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.

22 But the LORD is my defence; and my God *is* the rock of my refuge.

23 And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; *yea*, the LORD our God shall cut them off.

to set him at ease from the days of evil, till the pit be digged for the wicked. "Out of the law of God a good man may set his heart at ease in the days of evil; in full assurance that the pit is digging for the wicked." See Mudge and Green.

Ver. 15. *But judgment shall return unto righteousness*] For judgment shall come about again to justice, and in its train all the upright of heart. This expression seems figuratively to suppose that God has his rounds or circuits for judgment, when he will do full justice in the sight of all honest men: who are represented as attending the train, and assisting to the pomp of its execution.

Ver. 16, 17. *Who will rise up for me? &c.*] *Who will stand up for me against the evil-doers? Who will rank himself on my side against the dealers in vanity [the practisers of idolatry]?—Ver. 17. If the Lord be not my help, my soul in an instant will be lodged in silence.* Mudge. Several of the versions render the word דומם *dumab*, which we read *silence* by Hades, the grave, or place of the departed. Dr. De-laney is of opinion, that David, reflecting upon the late danger of his army, added the seven last verses to this psalm. See Ps. cxxiv.

Ver. 18. *When I said, My foot slippeth*] The *slipping or moving of the foot*, is an expression which we often meet with, to signify any inevitable danger, as it does here; and it seems to be a metaphor taken from the sure consequence of such an accident, when two men are engaged at single combat; in which case, if one of them trips and falls, his adversary has him at his mercy.

Ver. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts*] *When my solicitudes are multiplied within me.* The word סרפפאי *sarappai*, *solicitudes*, means the *discursus*, or *branchings of the mind*; a word which strongly expresses the action of the soul when it sends itself forth on all sides. "The old version renders it, *In the multitude of the sorrows*; which must be in some fort peculiar to the men of thought and reflection. That there are such sorrows, we learn from one who was a man of thought; Eccles. i. 18. If we follow the train of thought which he has marked out, and view the life of man under all the various circumstances incident to it, every step we take will yield a proof of his proposition; every discovery will bring its torment, when we find that *all the days of man are sorrows, and his travails grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night.* But there

"is no end of such enquiries; and indeed not much reason for it. We may sit still, and our own experience will bring this knowledge home to us, without giving us the trouble of looking abroad into the world to find it. Cares and anxieties will make their way to us, though our doors are guarded within and without. The distemper then is plain; but who is he who can cure it? One remedy there is, capable of administering pleasure and delight to our minds, amidst all the uncertainties and vexations which surround us. What this is, you may learn from the present passage; the plain meaning of which is, that religion, or a just sense of our relation to God, is our only real and solid support against the many evils of life. This is our sheet-anchor: with this, no state of life is insupportable; without it, no condition is tolerable. As we value, therefore, even the pleasures of this life, and our share in the good things of the world, which the providence of God has placed before us; let us keep ourselves in a capacity of enjoying them by holding fast the comforts of religion. These only can give us a true relish of our pleasures; these only can enable us to bear like men our share of evil and affliction: our heart will often be disquieted within us, and we shall in the multitude of our thoughts find a multitude of sorrows; let us therefore keep God our friend, *whose comforts will refresh our souls.*" Thus far Bishop Sherlock in his excellent Discourse upon this verse; vol. ii. p. 271. Nor can I with my reader a finer or more improving entertainment than the perusal of the whole.

Ver. 20. *Shall the throne of iniquity, &c.*] *Shall the throne of iniquity be favoured by thee, which giveth a sanction to grievances by its edicts?* that is, "Shall the tribunal which is erected by our invaders for the oppression of the people be patronized by thee? Shall tyrants be dignified with the name of gods, and be reputed thy associates in the government of the world?" Green. This and the following verses are easily applicable to Christ.

Ver. 23. *Bring upon them*] Or, *Render them.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, There is an Almighty Judge to whom the oppressed may appeal, and who will vindicate their cause.

The Psalmist lodges his appeal with God against his adversaries. O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, who hath

P S A L. XCV.

An exhortation to praise God, for his greatness and for his goodness; and not to tempt him.

OCOME, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

hath the power to avenge the oppressed, and whose holiness engages him to exert it, *show thyself*, or *shine forth*, appear in behalf of thy suffering people, and confound with the light of truth the works of darkness. *Lift up thyself; thou Judge of the earth*, that those who say the Lord hath forsaken the earth, and with confidence of impunity grow daring in wickedness, may be dismayed, and that God's people may be comforted by his appearing. *Note*; Under every present oppression it becomes God's people patiently to endure, and wait the day when he who judgeth righteously shall arise to avenge them speedily.

2dly, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; they shall be comforted in, and be delivered from, all their troubles.

1. God will bless them in all their sufferings; though their enemies for a time are permitted to prevail, they are but the rod in God's hand, and lifted up with the most gracious design for the good of the people of God. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest*; every child of God may expect corrections in the course of the divine providence; they are absolutely necessary, and a proof of his adoption; and, so far from complaining of them as hard, he should regard them as some of the kindest instances of paternal tenderness: *and teachest him out of thy law*, afflictions being designed for our instruction and improvement; God by his word and Spirit teaching his children how to profit under his correcting hand; and we are then blessed indeed, when by our trials we gain a surer evidence of our sonship, and grow more conformed to the image of our crucified Master: *that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, or evil*; for this works peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby: the Lord also sweetly supports the souls of his saints under their troubles, till the end for which they were sent is answered, and then he delivers them safely out of them; and he will shortly bring his faithful ones to his eternal rest, where their enemies shall for ever cease from troubling: *until the pit be digged for the wicked, whose end is destruction, eternal torment their portion, and the abyss of hell their accursed abode. For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance*; so that the faithful may confidently trust him, and wait in hope: *But judgment shall return unto righteousness*; the seeming disorders of providence shall be rectified, when in the last days all the antichristian persecutors of God's people shall have their plagues poured out upon them; and in the day of final retribution God will appear righteous in all his judgments: *and all the upright in heart shall follow it*; either the judgment of God with their praises, acknowledging the glory of his justice, Rev. xvi. 6, 7.; xix. 1, 2. or righteousness, approving themselves before him in all holy conversation and godliness; or, as the words may be ren-

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dered, *all the upright in heart shall be after him*, as the flock of his pasture attending their shepherd, and following the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth, with their unceasing praises.

2. He will help and defend his faithful people, and make them at last more than conquerors. *Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?* The Psalmist speaks in the person of God's suffering church and people, describing the character of their enemies, *evil-doers and workers of iniquity*, who made no difficulty of committing all manner of abominations, and therefore the more to be feared; while the question put intimates the weakness of God's people to struggle with their mightier foes, unless God himself interpose; for indeed, when we consider our enemies spiritual and temporal, we shall find ourselves a very unequal match for them, and may well say, *Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost, or must quickly have, dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth, I am sinking, help, Lord, I perish; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up*; mercy which never fails toward those who sincerely seek it, and then appears most precious when extended to us in the time of need: let no afflicted child of God therefore despond, but look to him who glorifies his grace in delivering the souls appointed unto death. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, perplexed and distressed, as God's dearest people sometimes may be, thy comforts delight my soul*; comforts arising from a sense of the transcendantly rich and free grace of God, derived from Jesus, and by his Spirit shed abroad in the heart; comforts, not like those poor pleasures that the world can minister to sooth the melancholy; which often are ineffectual to dispel the gloom; and when successful, are but like the momentary relief procured by an opiate, while the disease remains rooted as ever; but *these comforts delight the soul, are solid, substantial, abiding, enjoyed independent of all that the world can give or take away, and the foretastes of eternal consolation. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee?* No, that God abhors; and most abhors those, who, in his name, pretend authority for committing iniquity. *But the Lord is my defence from every assault, and my God is the rock of my refuge*, where the soul of the faithful is safe, founded on Christ who will protect his people, and punish their cruel enemies. *He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, the just punishment of it*; and, for the blood which they have shed, give them blood to drink, Rev. xvi. 6. *and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off*; and then woe unto their souls, they must perish without hope; their wickedness will follow them to their graves, witness against them in judgment, and thrust them down into the belly of hell. Such is the end of the ungodly.

E c

PSAL.

5 The sea *is* his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry *land*.

6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

7 For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and* as in the day of temptation in the

wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

10 Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It *is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

P S A L. XCV.

THIS psalm was written by David; for the apostle to the Hebrews cites a passage out of it under his name. See Heb. iv. 7. It seems to have been intended as a solemn invitation of the people, when they were assembled together on some public occasion, to praise their God; and to hear instructions out of his law. But it also plainly relates to the days of Christ, as the Jews themselves acknowledge, and as the apostle proves fully in the third and fourth chapters of the epistle before mentioned.

Ver. 7. To-day if ye will hear his voice] The people having said, *We are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand*, God is introduced, saying, "Since then you are so, from this day be not like your fathers; behave like my sheep, and harden not your hearts." It is plain, therefore, that the voice of God must begin here; accordingly, this sentence should begin the 8th verse, and be rendered thus: *From this day, if you will hear my voice, harden not your heart as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness;* *ver. 9. When your fathers put me to the proof, tried me, even at the same time that they saw my glorious doing.* Mudge. We would just observe, that the word rendered *pasture*, in the original, signifies also *dominion*. According to this sense of the word, the other phrase, *sheep of his hand*, will here be a more fit, though figurative expression: the shepherd who rules the sheep, doing it with his hand, which manages the rod and staff by which they are ruled. See Pf. xxiii. 4.

Ver. 11. Unto whom I swear] *Wherefore I swear, &c.* It is well known, that the land of Canaan was a type of heaven, where, after all his toils, the good and faithful servant is to enter into the joy of his Lord; and as those Israelites in the wilderness were not permitted to enter into the land of Canaan, because of their unbelief, their distrust in God's providence, and consequent disobedience; St. Paul hence takes occasion to exhort the Jews, Heb. ii. 1—4. to accept readily the terms offered to them by the gospel: and in the subsequent chapter he shows that the words of the present Psalm are applicable to the state of Christianity; and intimates to them, that if they persisted in an obstinate refusal of those gracious offers, *they* likewise would fall through unbelief.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Psalmist opens with a warm exhortation to all around him, to unite in the delightful work of praise to the great God and Saviour.

1. He directs how they should draw near to him with a joyful noise, not only making melody in their hearts, but

speaking forth his praise in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, with thanksgiving for all his boundless mercies; with humble reverence and lowly adoration kneeling before him; the posture of their body expressing the deep abasement of their souls in his presence.

2. He points out abundant matter for their praises.

(1.) He is *the rock of our salvation*, hath obtained it for his faithful people; and all who are perseveringly built upon him, are secure from all wrath, and safe from all enemies.

(2.) He is *a great God*, partaking of all the essential attributes of Deity; eternal, omnipotent, omniscient.

(3.) His dominion is universal: *He is a great king above all gods*; by him all earthly princes reign, to him all magistrates are accountable, and before him the fictitious gods of the heathen perish: he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. His dominion is wide, extending from pole to pole; both land and sea acknowledge his sovereignty: the deepest recesses of the earth he searches, and the highest mountains are fixed by his power, and upheld by his providence. *Note*; If all the world be thus in the hands of our Jesus, how can his faithful people want any manner of thing that is good?

(4.) He is the maker of all, and therefore justly the owner; by him and in him we live and move and have our being: he bade the dry land appear, and bound up the great deep in swaddling-bands. These are thy works, O God; and justly therefore does he deserve to be praised, of whom are all things, and for whom are all things.

(5.) He stands in a peculiar relation to his believing people, and demands their grateful tribute of thanksgiving. *For he is our God and Saviour*, who became incarnate for us, our substitute and surety; *and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand*; not merely fed by his providence, but formed for himself by grace, to be a peculiar people, led by his word and Spirit, and protected by his power. Well, therefore, may we say in this view, *O come, let us sing unto the Lord*, who is so worthy to be praised, and to be had in everlasting remembrance.

2dly, The tribute of our lips is but a vain oblation, unless our lives also shew forth the Saviour's praise; therefore we are called upon,

1. *To hear his voice*: this is our great duty as *the sheep of his hand*, who must know the shepherd's voice, and follow it. *Note*; If Christ be our Saviour and King, justly does he expect that we should be obedient subjects: to none but these is he the author of eternal salvation.

2. This must be done immediately, *to-day*, while it is called to-day; delays are dangerous. By nothing are souls

more

P S A L. XCVI.

An exhortation to praise God, for his greatness, for his kingdom, and for his general judgment.

O SING unto the LORD a new song :
sing unto the LORD, all the earth.

2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name ;
shew forth his salvation from day to day.

3 Declare his glory among the heathen, his
wonders among all people.

4 For the LORD *is* great, and greatly to be
praised : he *is* to be feared above all gods.

5 For all the gods of the nations *are* idols :
but the LORD made the heavens.

6 Honour and majesty *are* before him :
strength and beauty *are* in his sanctuary.

7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of
the people, give unto the LORD glory and
strength.

more frequently undone than by procrastination ; they
put off the concerns of eternity to a more convenient
season, and perish ere it arrives.

3. We are warned of our danger. *Harden not your heart*
against Christ and his gospel, as the Jews did, who rejected
the true Messiah ; and as their fathers before them had
done in the wilderness, their whole conduct being one
continued scene of rebellions and provocations against him.
Note ; (1.) However slightly men pass over their sins, in
God's sight they are highly provoking. (2.) Disbelief of
God's promises is among the greatest insults that we can
shew him, yet a crime that we are very apt to disregard and
make light of. (3.) That heart is hardened indeed, which the
great and precious promises of the gospel cannot affect.
(4.) It is wise to be warned by others' misfortunes, lest we
fall after the same example of unbelief.

P S A L. XCVI.

THIS psalm is attributed to David in the Greek copies.
It was composed by him upon the translation of the ark
from the house of Obed-edom to the place that he had pre-
pared for it on mount Sion : and it is extant in 1 Chron. xvi.
only differing in some particulars, which are supposed to
have been added by Ezra upon rebuilding the temple after
the captivity. But, says Bishop Patrick, it never had a
full completion till the time of the Messiah, who was
indeed the temple of God, which came to dwell among
us. Several of the Jewish Rabbis acknowledge that it be-
longs to his times, and the Syriac title informs us, that
it was a prophesy of the coming of Christ, and the calling
of the Gentiles.

Ver. 5. The gods of the nations are idols] *Things of nothing.*
Mudge. Vanities ; things which have no substance or
being. The words *strength* and *beauty*, or *glory*, in the next
verse, are the very words by which the ark is described
in Pf. lxxviii. 61.

8 Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto
his name : bring an offering, and come into
his courts.

9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of
holiness : fear before him, all the earth.

10 Say among the heathen *that* the LORD
reigneth : the world also shall be established
that it shall not be moved : he shall judge the
people righteously.

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the
earth be glad ; let the sea roar, and the ful-
ness thereof.

12 Let the field be joyful, and all that *is*
therein : then shall all the trees of the wood
rejoice

13 Before the LORD : for he cometh, for
he cometh to judge the earth : he shall judge
the world with righteousness, and the people
with his truth.

Ver. 8. Give unto the Lord, &c.] After David has ex-
horted the people to praise and to give thanks to God
for his peculiar mercies to them, he breaks out into a rap-
ture of gratitude, in contemplation of the infinite bounty
and benignity of the Creator ; and calls upon the whole
creation to fill up the chorus of his praise ; *Give unto the*
Lord, &c. to the end of the psalm. In 1 Chron. xvi. 34.
he returns to his own people, *O give thanks unto the Lord,*
&c. and concludes with those words which seem to be
the form in which he blessed, i. e. prayed for his people ;
first calling upon them to join with him in the prayer,
ver. 35. *and say ye, Save us, O God, &c.* See Delaney's Life
of David, b. ii. c. 12.

Ver. 9. In the beauty of holiness] *The beauty of holiness*
means the temple, or courts of the temple ; which was the
peculiar residence of Jehovah, and remarkable for its
beauty and elegance. *By the Lord*, in the next verse,
both Jews and Christians generally agree that the Messiah
is meant.

Ver. 11—13. Let the heavens rejoice] These three verses
are a poetical description of the great causes of joy, which
this kingdom of Christ, expressed by the *Lord's reigning*,
ver. 10. and *coming to judge the world*, ver. 13. and which
was to be spiritually erected, would bring to the whole
world. *The heavens*, and *earth*, and *sea*, and *trees*, and
fields, are here put together, according to the scripture
style, to denote the whole inferior world ; which, inter-
preting the heavens of the airy regions, is made up of
these. *By his judging, &c.* is here meant his reforming
and regenerating mankind, and governing them by right-
eous laws.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, When Jesus is the subject of our
song, words must fail to speak our gratitude.

1. With warm devotion the enraptured Psalmist calls
on God's believing people through the whole earth, to
join

P S A L M XCVII.

The majesty of God's kingdom. The church rejoiceth at God's judgments upon idolaters. An exhortation to godliness and gladness.

THE LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

join the song of praise, and publish abroad from day to day, to the most distant heathen lands, the glory of his grace, and the wonders of his mercy in that amazing work that he has accomplished, the salvation of sinners; a theme which will be for ever new, nor to eternity be exhausted, but minister occasion for new and everlasting praises.

2. He mentions various particulars which afford motives and matter for our songs. *For the Lord is great, in uncreated glory, in the works of creation and providence, and especially in those of redemption and grace, and greatly to be praised;* and, when we raise our loftiest strains, he is exalted still far above all blessing and praise: *he is to be feared above all gods. For, however high their votaries exalt them, all the gods of the nations are idols, or mere nothings, unable to do good or hurt, lifeless and insensible: but the Lord made the heavens, and garnished them with all their lustre to declare his glory. Honour and majesty are before him; enthroned in brightness inaccessible; adoring angels bow before him, and cover their faces with their wings: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary; strength, visible in the conversion of sinners, and the support of his militant saints; and beauty displayed in all the ordinances of his worship, and graces of his Spirit bestowed on his church and people here below, or in heaven, where the most glorious manifestations of his power and excellence appear, amidst cherubic hosts, and spirits of the just made perfect, who wonder and adore.*

3. The manner of their service is prescribed. No longer confined to one people; with regard to his visible church, his courts are open to all *kindreds or families*, and the believers of the whole earth must publicly approach him, *giving him the glory*, so peculiarly his own; not that we can bestow any thing on him, we receive all from him before we can render aught unto him; *acknowledging his power, dominion, and sovereignty. Bring an offering*, not the blood of beasts, but our own bodies, souls, and spirits, a living sacrifice; *worshipping him in the beauty of holiness*, both in his own instituted ordinances of prayer and praise, and out of pure hearts, sanctified by his grace, devoted to his glory; and with reverential fear, sensible of our own vanity, vileness, and unworthiness, to approach him so high, so holy.

2dly, The converted Jews and Gentiles, or rather the ministers intrusted with the gospel, are here directed what to say among the heathen.

1. *The Lord reigneth*, victorious over death and hell, and all his foes; ascended up on high, sat down on his throne, and all power committed to him in heaven and earth; exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.

2. *The world also shall be established that it shall not be*

2 Clouds and darkness *are* round about him: righteousness and judgment *are* the habitation of his throne.

3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.

4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.

moved; for he upholdeth all things by the word of his power, and will preserve this material world till his faithful ones are gathered out of it; and then reign over his glorified saints for ever and ever.

3. *He shall judge the people righteously;* the ordinances of his kingdom shall be most perfectly just and equitable; in the hearts of his faithful people he shall rule by his Spirit, establishing them in righteousness and true holiness, and be their judge to vindicate their cause against the accusations and attacks of every enemy.

4. Let heaven and earth adore him. *Let the heavens rejoice*, the angelic hosts who behold with joy the incarnate Saviour, and the conversion of the Gentile world, *and let the earth be glad;* the righteous, who see the Redeemer's kingdom exalted among men: *let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;* all who sail on these mighty waters must advance his praise. *Let the field be joyful and all that is therein;* the church, and all the members of it, inclosed by divine love, and cultivated by the great husbandman, exult in God their Saviour: *then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord;* every child of God, the planting of the Lord, shall bless and praise him. *Note;* The establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth is matter of general joy; and how much greater will the exultation be, when at last he shall for ever reign over his ancients gloriously!

5. Let the world prepare to meet their God, *for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth;* it is certain, it is near; at his tremendous bar must all appear, to receive according to the things they have done in the body; *with righteousness, and the people with his truth:* he needs no evidence who is omniscient; and being by his nature altogether righteous and true, his decisions will appear perfect justice. May we be found of him in peace at that day!

P S A L M XCVII.

The Greeks call this, "A Psalm of David, after his land was restored to him;" i. e. as Bishop Patrick explains it, after he was made master of all those countries which God anciently designed to be the inheritance of Israel. See 1 Chron. xviii. 1, 2. But in its sublimer meaning it belongs to Christ's triumph over the grave at his resurrection. This appears from those words which the apostle to the Hebrews alleges out of the 7th verse, and applies to Christ's royal power and authority over angels; and this the Hebrew Rabbis themselves, as Kimchi confesses, take to be here intended. Agreeably to this, the title of the psalm, in the Syriac version, says, "This psalm foretels the coming of Christ." The attentive reader will observe a great similarity between this and the 18th psalm: the poetical imagery of both is exceedingly lofty and

5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth.

6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.

7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.

8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD.

9 For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.

10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

and grand; and the thoughts and style of both are so much alike, that it cannot be questioned whether they were both written by the same hand. To give an instance: The invisibility of God is thus finely described in the 18th psalm, the 9th and following verses: *Darkness was under his feet: he made darkness his secret place: his pavilion round about him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies:* and then, to shew that by this dark and gloomy scene he only meant to describe that attribute of God, the Psalmist adds, ver. 12. *At the brightness that was before him, &c.* In like manner the same attribute is here thus described, ver. 2. *clouds and darkness, &c.* and then too it presently follows, in the very next verse, *A fire goeth before him.* The curious reader will compare the whole, and judge for himself

Ver. 2. The habitation of his throne] *The basis, or foundation of his throne.* It may be proper just to observe, that as the verbs in these first verses are in the present tense, so they should be throughout. In ver. 4. *His lightnings illuminate the world; the earth seeth, and trembleth:* ver. 5. *The mountains melt like wax, &c.* Every reader of taste must discern the sublimity of the passages, thus translated.

Ver. 7. Confounded be all they, &c.] *Let them all be ashamed, who worship graven images; who applaud themselves in vanity.* Mudge. The next sentence, *Worship him, all ye gods, or elohim,* is applied by the Apostle to the Hebrews, to the worship paid by the angels to Christ. The Vulgate, LXX, and several other versions, render it, *Worship him, all ye angels.* But we shall say more on this when we come to Heb. i. 6.

Ver. 8. Because of thy judgments] i. e. "Thy righteous determinations in favour of thy people."

Ver. 11. Light is sown for the righteous] Light and gladness are sown for the righteous, the righteous nation, in opposition to the wicked mentioned just before: victory and every kind of blessing God has wrought into the very nature of things for their benefit. In Ps. cxxvi. there is *reaping, and sheaves of joy.* Houbigant, however, translates it in the same manner as our old version, *is sprung up.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, *The Lord reigneth.* This is the glorious subject; all power in heaven and earth is committed into his hands.

1. It should be matter of joy to all. *Let the earth rejoice in the blessings which attend his government: let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof;* and among the rest especially our own, so highly favoured with the light of his glo-

rious gospel: though sometimes, as to us it appears, *clouds and darkness are round about him,* and his dispensations of providence or grace are dark and mysterious; yet, notwithstanding, *righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne,* the basis and support of it, and all his decisions most indisputably equitable.

2. His wrath will be terrible to those who refuse obedience to his government. *A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about;* which was seen in the vengeance executed on the Jewish people, who would not have him to rule over them; and will more eminently appear when he shall be revealed at the last day from heaven in flaming fire, and the breath of his mouth shall slay the wicked, 2 Thess. i. 7, &c. *His lightnings enlightened the world;* and, struck with terror at the judgments which, swift and irresistible as the flash of lightning, fell upon his murderers, *the earth saw and trembled.* *The hills,* his mighty opposers, proud of their strength, and immovable in their obstinacy, *melted like wax at the presence of the Lord: at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.* Thus the Jewish nation were consumed before the Roman sword; and thus the powers of Antichrist shall be dissolved, when he ariseth in the latter day to shake terribly the earth. *Note;* However secure and confident sinners are at present, the day is near when their stout hearts shall melt, and their knees tremble before the eternal Judge and King.

3. His judgments, executed on the ungodly, will be acknowledged as altogether righteous. *The heavens declare his righteousness;* the lightning and thunder, employed as instruments of his vengeance; or the angelic hosts, who laud and praise him for the justice executed on the wicked: *and all his faithful people see and acknowledge his glory,* manifested in their salvation, and in the destruction of the impenitent. *Confounded be all they, or they shall be confounded, that serve graven images,* whether heathen or popish idolaters; which may be considered as a prophecy of the ruin they will bring upon themselves by such abominations; and *that boast themselves of idols,* which is remarkably verified in the Papists, who glory in their pictures and images of the Virgin Mary and their saints, and place such confidence in them, with a folly equal to their wickedness, and which at last will be manifest to all men: *worship him, all ye gods;* the angels, so called, who adore him for all his works of righteous judgment. *Note;* (1.) Jesus is very God; the angels worship him, and teach us where to pay our adorations. (2.) If they are our fellow-servants, and fellow-worshippers,

P S A L. XCVIII.

The Psalmist exhorteth the Jews, the Gentiles, and all creatures, to praise God.

A Psalm.

O SING unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

2 The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the fight of the heathen.

3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

5 Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.

6 With trumpets and sound of cornet, make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.

7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

8 Let the floods clap *their* hands: let the hills be joyful together

9 Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

worshippers, what folly, as well as profaneness, would it argue to make them the objects of our devotions.

2dly, It was commanded, that the whole earth should rejoice in the establishment of Christ's kingdom on the ruin of his enemies; and, however others may be affected, his Zion, his church, and the daughters of Judah, all faithful souls, cannot but be glad.

1. They have abundant cause to be so.

(1.) Because of the dignity of their Redeemer's person. *For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth;* the name of Jesus is above every name, not only on earth but in heaven, and all power is given him over them both: *thou art exalted far above all gods;* not only the fictitious deities of men; but the angels, principalities and powers, are all subject to him.

(2.) Because *he preserveth the souls of his saints.* This is their character: they are separated by his grace from a world which lieth in wickedness; they are justified through his merit, and *upright in heart* by the power of the Divine Spirit, renewing their minds in true holiness; they *love the Lord*, unfeignedly make him the object of their affections, and cleave to him alone. Such souls are precious in his sight; he preserves them from the power of sin, and strengthens them against every temptation: *he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked*, of wicked men, or wicked devils, who seek to seduce and destroy them, but cannot, for God is their refuge and strength; and therefore they are bound to praise him.

(3.) Because *light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.* Whatever darkness may at times surround the providential path of the faithful, at even-tide it shall be light, and the brightness of eternal glory awaits them. Though for a moment they may be now in heaviness through manifold temptations, yet even in the midst of their sorrows God's comforts do refresh their souls, and quickly every tear shall be wiped from their eyes; and joy and gladness, eternal and uninterrupted, be their happy portion.

(4.) Because of his *judgments.* The justice of God magnified in the damnation of the wicked, as well as the mercy of God exalted in the salvation of the righteous,

affords just matter for his faithful people's everlasting praise.

2. The manner in which they must express their joy and gratitude is described. (1.) *Rejoice in the Lord*, in Christ Jesus, not in ourselves, our own doings, or deserts, but in his promises and grace. (2.) *Give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness*, with our lips we must speak to his honour, and his holiness be especially the theme, at which sinners tremble, and saints rejoice. (3.) *Hate evil*: our lives as well as lips must shew forth his praise; without which all the offerings of the tongue and knee are unacceptable, and hypocritical. *Note*; (1.) The love of God, where genuine, cannot but produce hatred of sin. (2.) The more we keep in mind God's holiness, the more we shall be deterred from approaching whatever is offensive to him.

P S A L. XCVIII.

This psalm has several expressions like those which are used in Psal. xcvi. and therefore probably it was composed by David. The Greek copies call it, "A Psalm of David." Perhaps it was written upon occasion of some remarkable deliverance which God had lately granted to Israel, as an earnest of future blessings; especially of the coming of that great blessing, the Lord Christ, to give salvation to his faithful people. Grotius is of opinion, that this psalm is a kind of summary or abridgement of Moses's song in Exod. xv.

Ver. 1. Hath gotten him the victory] *Hath brought him salvation.* This in the strictest letter belongs to the prophetic sense, accomplished in the resurrection of Christ. For then, in an eminent manner, did the divine power, called God's *right hand*, and God's *fidelity* in making good his promise, fitly stiled *his holy arm*, bring him, that is Christ, relief; in raising his dead body out of the grave. See Dr. Hammond.

Ver. 3. He hath remembered his mercy] That this is prophetically spoken of the redemption of mankind by Christ, appears from Luke, i. 54. 72.

Ver. 7—9. Let the sea roar, &c.] The whole heathen world are here expressed by the several parts of this visible globe;

P S A L. XCIX.

The prophets setting forth the kingdom of God in Zion, exhorteth all, by the example of their forefathers, to worship God at his holy hill.

THE LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth *between* the cherubims; let the earth be moved.

2 The LORD is great in Zion; and he is

high above all the people.

3 Let them praise thy great and terrible name; *for it is holy.*

4 The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

5 Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; *for he is holy.*

globe; *sea and world, and floods and hills*; as before they were by *earth and sea, &c.* in Psal. xcvi. These are here poetically represented as expressing their joy, after the manner of men: the *sea roaring*, as men in triumph make a loud and vehement noise; the *floods clapping their hands*, as men do in token of delight and approbation; and the *hills, in like manner, refounding their joy*. Mudge renders this, *Let the mountains at the same time shout before the Lord.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have repeated calls to *sing unto the Lord*, for our hearts are too often sadly out of tune, and need be urged to the blessed work; and what can enliven them, if this *new song* does not, the subject of which is redeeming love? Three things are here suggested, as claiming our most enlarged praise.

1. The work that Jesus hath wrought. *For he hath done marvellous things.* His incarnation, miracles, life, death, resurrection, ascension, are all wonderful: his love to sinners, his gifts of pardon, grace, and glory, stupendous: his whole salvation, from its contrivance to its consummation, marvellous. *His right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.* Alone he took the field against our foes, infinitely too great to need assistance, and too jealous of his own honour to accept it. Alone he won the day, vanquished Satan, made an end of sin, destroyed death, shut up the jaws of hell, opened the gates of heaven. Can we believe it, and not triumph in the God of our salvation!

2. The gospel preached. *The Lord hath made known his salvation*, himself the great Evangelist, and commissioning his servants in his name to carry the glad tidings to the ends of the earth. *His righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen*; the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his promises, and his own all-sufficient merit by which the salvation is obtained, and openly shewed, not in dark types, but in his own obedience unto death; and his grace not confined to one people, but all nations freely invited to the faith and privileges of the gospel.

3. The prophecies fulfilled. *He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel*; appearing as their Messiah in the fulness of time, according to the promises which went before concerning him. *All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God*; agreeable to the prophetic word, which declared that he should be the light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel.

2dly, The psalm concludes with an exhortation to all people, with voices and music, aloud to exalt the Redeemer's name, and with that warmth of affection to his

person, zeal for his glory, and exceeding great joy, which his transcendantly rich salvation should inspire; yea, the inanimate creation are called upon to join the song of praise to the universal Lord, and the eternal King; whose government, in the dispensation of the gospel, will be ever most just and equitable; and his decisions, when he shall sit upon the throne of final judgment, be altogether righteous. *Note*: If we know Jesus as our Lord and King, it cannot but minister to us matter of the most enlivened joy, and tune our hearts for his praise.

P S A L. XCIX.

This psalm also is attributed to David by the LXX, and most other ancient versions. It seems to relate to his quiet establishment on his throne. The Syriac title tells us, that it treats primarily of the slaughter of the Midianites, and that in its secondary sense it is a prediction of the glory of Christ's kingdom.

Ver. 1. Let the people tremble] The literal sense seems to be, "God hath now established David on the throne, and settled the kingdom upon him, notwithstanding all the seditions or tumults of rebels, or other adversaries." The other expression is to the same sense: *Let the earth be moved*; i. e. this hath been accomplished, notwithstanding all the commotions and uproars of the people of the earth. Mudge renders both the clauses in the future: *The people shall tremble;—the earth shall be moved.*

Ver. 3, 4. Let them, &c.] *They shall praise, they shall do homage to thy great and terrible name, because it is holy*: Green adds, *and powerful*, from the next verse, which he renders thus: *The king loveth judgment*: But Mudge renders it, *Though the king be strong he loveth judgment*: And he observes, that the latter part of the verse refers to the body of laws which God had given at Sinai. Dr. Delaney supposes, that as this psalm was composed when David was settled in his kingdom, so this verse particularly refers to his *executing judgment and justice unto all his people*. Whoever peruses the psalm will find, that David here, as everywhere else, considers God as the king of Israel, and himself only as his deputy. To this purpose are these expressions in the beginning of it: *The Lord reigneth:—the Lord is great in Zion*. It is true, David delighted to exert all the power which God had given him to its true purposes: *The king's strength loveth judgment*; but it was in reality God who executed them all. *Thou dost establish, &c.* Then follows the one inference always drawn from every position of David's, that God is ever to be worshipped and glorified: *ver. 5. Exalt ye the Lord, &c.* Life of David, b. iii. c. 4.

Ver. 5. Worship at his footstool] *Towards his footstool* [the ark] Nold. 1008. See 1 Chron. xxviii. 2. Psal. cxxxii. 7.

The

6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance *that* he gave them.

8 Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them; though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.

9 Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God *is* holy.

The Israelites when they worshipped turned their faces towards the ark.

Ver. 6. Moses and Aaron among his priests] With his princes,—his chiefs. Nold. 879. That is, his principal and most famous ministers. The meaning is, “*Thus did Moses and Aaron, who were among his priests, and thus did Samuel also, one of the greatest of those prophets who were wont to intercede for you.*” We have had occasion heretofore to observe, that the word translated *priests*, is a common title of civil and ecclesiastical officers.

Ver. 7. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar] This passage is very clear as to Moses and Aaron. But it is not any where expressly said that God spake unto Samuel out of a cloudy pillar; however, Dr. Hammond has observed, that it is probable enough from his history, that he did so: for when Samuel was so signally heard by God at Mizpeh, 1 Sam. vii. it is said, ver. 9. *The Lord heard him*; and ver. 10. *The Lord thundered with a great thunder*; where God’s voice and thunder were, questionless, like that in Exod. xix. 16. where the *clouds* are mentioned as well as the thunder; and indeed where thunder is, a cloud must be supposed to be; and so this answering of Samuel with thunder, must be God’s speaking to him at this time out of the cloud also.

Ver. 8. Thou answeredst them, &c.] Fenwick renders this verse thus:

Them, Lord our God, thou didst accept;
Through them thou didst forbear, and mercy grant,
Though thy just vengeance had the people seiz’d.

The Hebrew **לָבֵם** *labem*, signifies, *for them*, or their intercession. *Thou wast a forbearing God, though punishing*; or, when thou hadst begun to punish the people by sending plagues among them. Agreeably hereto the Chaldee renders it, *Thou sparedst thy people, because of them, or for their sakes*. That God did so, see Exod. xxxii. 11. 14. Numb. xvi. 47, 48. 1 Sam. vii. 9. Bishop Hare and Houbigant render the latter clause, *and didst not punish their deeds*. See their notes.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The exaltation of Jesus is the joy of his people and the terror of his enemies.

1. It speaks terror to his enemies. *The Lord reigneth*, whom men by wicked hands had crucified and slain; but by Divine power arisen from the dead, is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; *let the people tremble*; all the enemies of his kingdom, who will not have him to reign over them, shall feel ere long with terror the rod of his judgment: *he sitteth between the cherubims*, on his exalted throne, attended by ministering spirits, ready to fulfil his pleasure: *let the earth be moved*, as when the Jewish civil and

ecclesiastical state was dissolved by his righteous vengeance, and as the whole world will be in the day of perdition of the ungodly. *Note*; Many mock at the terrors of God’s judgments, who will, to their cost, shortly find them awful realities.

2. It is the joy of his people. *The Lord is great in Zion*, where many of his miracles were wrought, and from whence his gospel went forth, or rather in the spiritual Zion his church, who behold the glory of his person and offices, and enjoy his protection and blessing; *and he is high above all people*, not only as head of his church, but as God over all, blessed for ever, and therefore are they bound to rejoice in him. *Let them praise thy great and terrible name*; terrible to his foes, but most lovely to his people: *for it is holy*, and this it is which renders it a terror to sinners, and so glorious in the eyes of his saints. *The king’s strength also loveth judgment*; Almighty as he is, his power is never abused to injustice, but righteousness is his delight, and the constant guide of his administration; *thou dost establish equity*; his laws are all most holy and just; *thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob*, protecting his believing people by his providence, correcting them when they offend, and governing his mediatorial kingdom in the most righteous manner; and for this his subjects are called upon to adore him. *Exalt ye the Lord our God* with heart and voice, in all the glorious offices he bears, *and worship at his sanctuary* with lowly reverence, praising him for all his greatness and glory, and looking up to him for the continual supplies of his power and grace: *for he is holy*: worthy our highest adoration, and faithful to all his promises, as they will ever find who worship him in spirit and in truth.

2dly, The Lord has been the object of adoration to all his saints of old, and their experience proves him to be the God who heareth and answereth the prayers of his believing people. We have,

1. The names and characters of these most eminent men of God; *Moses and Aaron among his priests*, Moses having exercised the sacerdotal office till Aaron was appointed thereunto with his brethren, *and Samuel among them that call upon his name*: these eminent worthies stand distinguished not so much for their station and dignity; to which God advanced them, as for their piety: *they called upon the Lord*, in every emergency they placed their dependance on God, and found him a never-failing refuge: *they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them*, conscientiously observant of the precepts of his law, and the ceremonies of his worship: and they who thus walk in God’s ways, may expect that in those ways he will meet them, and answer all their petitions.

2. The notice and regard God shewed them. *He answered*

PSAL. C.

An exhortation to praise God cheerfully, for his greatness, and for his power.

A Psalm of Praise.

MAKE a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it

is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

5 For the LORD is good, his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

answered them; granted their requests, and communed with them as a man with his friends. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar; to Moses and Aaron often, and probably to Samuel also in the frequent visions vouchsafed to him. Thou answeredst them, O Lord, our God, when, as advocates for rebellious Israel, they lifted up their prayer for mercy: thou wast a God that forgavest them, at the intercession of these holy men, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions; making them smart for their sins by their sufferings, though prevailed upon by the prayers of these saints from utterly destroying them. Note; We can never sufficiently value the prayers of good men; they are indeed often branded as the troublers, but are in fact the preservers of the nation.

3. The praise due to God for these mercies. Exalt the Lord our God: as our God, he deserves our love and praise, and our fathers' mercies are our own, and demand our grateful acknowledgments: and worship at his holy hill; in the church of Christ: for the Lord our God is holy in his nature, in all his works and ways, and to be exalted by all his people according to his adorable perfections.

PSAL. C.

Title. מִזְמוֹר לְתוֹדָה *mizmor lethodah*] This is the only psalm in the whole collection intitled "A Psalm of Praise;" and it is supposed to have received this appellation because peculiarly adapted, if not designed, to be sung when the sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered. See Lev. vii. 12. The Greeks think it was written by David, who here invites all the world to join with the Israelites in the service of God, whose divine sovereignty he here recognizes.

Ver. 3. Know ye, &c.] Acknowledge that, &c. "Recognize Jehovah for your God." The next clause is rendered by Houbigant and Mudge, more conformably to the context, He hath made us, and we are his: his people, &c.

Ver. 5. For the Lord is good] I think the following, says Mudge, is the true version. Bless his name, for it is good: the Lord, for his favour is everlasting; and so every where. See Pf. cxxxv. 3. This last verse seems to be the response of the whole chorus of the priests, at the instant of firing the sacrifice; the prefect or precentor having sung the rest. But the psalm may also be understood as prophetic of the calling forth of Jews and Gentiles to the profession of the Gospel. And then, by the gates of Sion, ver. 4, must be mystically meant the Christian church; and this last verse must be considered as the answer of the

people to the Psalmist's call, in the same sense with Isai. ii. 2, 3.

REFLECTIONS.—Praise is the work of heaven, and upon earth the pleasing employment of God's people.

1. The Psalmist calls upon them to laud the Lord, and directs how to worship and serve him acceptably. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, aloud proclaim his glory, all ye lands from pole to pole. Serve the Lord with gladness, not under the yoke of Jewish ceremonies, and the spirit of bondage, which under the law prevailed; but with that delight which the spirit of adoption gives, rendering his service perfect freedom: come before his presence with singing; in private and public worship celebrating his mercies, and pouring forth the tribute of our grateful songs. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise, joining our voices to the great congregation that in his house adore him: be thankful unto him for all the innumerable blessings, spiritual and temporal, which with unsparing hand he hath bestowed, and daily showers down upon us, and bless his name, ascribing to him the honour and glory of all, to whom alone the praise of all is due.

2. Abundant cause there is, why we should thus bless and praise him. [1.] He is God, the only true God, the fountain of blessedness, in his perfections transcendently adorable, and exalted far above all blessing and praise. [2.] He is the God that hath made us, and not we ourselves; in him we live, and move, and have our being; our bodies and our souls are both the work of his hands, and the new creation in Christ Jesus is by the mighty working of his Divine Spirit. [3.] We are his people; as our Creator, he hath the most incontestable right to our service; all we have and are is his, derived from him, and should be devoted to him; and before him we must at last render up an account of the talents with which he has intrusted us. [4.] We are the sheep of his pasture, bought with his blood, fed by his providence and grace, protected by his care, and regarded as his treasure. [5.] He is good in himself, and in the dispensations of his providence and grace is continually manifesting his goodness to us. [6.] His mercy is everlasting; he bears with us long and is kind, multiplies his pardons, and his love to faithful souls continues eternally. [7.] His truth endureth to all generations; his fidelity to his promises is inviolable for ever, and all the generations of his faithful people shall prove it to their great consolation. This know ye; O ye children of God, meditate on the glorious subject, and then it cannot but fill your enraptured

P S A L. CI.

David maketh a vow and profession of godliness.

A Psalm of David.

I Will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect

way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

tured hearts with love, and your joyful lips with grateful, constant, and ardent praise.

P S A L. CI.

Title. לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר *ledavid mizmor.*] David being well established on his throne, and settled in his new built palace, resolved to regulate his family and court. He wisely considered, that the example of the prince would have great influence on the morals of the people; and that he could not with any dignity and consistency punish the crimes of others, if he was guilty of the same in his own private conduct, or if he allowed them with impunity in his attendants and courtiers; and therefore, determined that he would severely punish all great and incorrigible offenders, he purposed to be himself a pattern of religion, holiness, and virtue, to his people; and to retain, as far as he could avoid it, none for his domestics and officers, but such as were men of principle, piety, and virtue. The schemes that he formed, and the regulations that he fixed on in this respect, he has transmitted down to us in the following ode; which will do honour to his memory, as a good man and an excellent king, throughout all generations. Dr. Chandler.

Ver. 1. *I will sing of mercy and judgment.*] This psalm has a double reference, and describes the manner in which David intended to act as king of Israel towards all his subjects, under their different denominations, as they were good or bad. Towards the faithful in the land, he would shew חֶסֶד *chesed*, constant benignity and favour. Towards the wicked, and such as obstinately violated the laws, he would exercise מִשְׁפָּט *mishpat*, judgment; as he would judge and punish them according to their deeds. As this was his fixed purpose, he consecrated this song to God. *To thee, O Lord, says he, I will sing;* appealing hereby to him for the sincerity of his intention, to make mercy and judgment the great rules of his administration; and, accordingly, it is observed of him, that *he executed justice and judgment unto all the people.* 2 Sam. viii. 15.

Ver. 2. *I will behave, &c.*] *I will give instruction on the way of integrity: When will it come unto me?* i. e. "I will compose a *maschil* to teach the true conduct of life: (O how long will it be ere I have the pleasure of enjoying it!)" Thus, says Mudge, will the sense be naturally continued on from singing and playing on instruments; after which begins the plan itself. *I will walk, &c.* But Dr. Chandler thinks that our version expresses the real sense, as the psalm does not contain instructive precepts to others, but the wise and salutary resolutions which David had made in reference to himself. Bishop Patrick is of opinion, that the expression refers to his own private behaviour, and contains his fixed purpose of studying with all diligence, integrity of life, and purity of manners. But, though this should not be wholly excluded, the passage seems rather to relate to his public conduct in the administration of government. He would

sing of mercy and of judgment, as he was resolved to act with wisdom and circumspection, and with the most impartial justice toward all his subjects without exception. This interpretation seems to be countenanced by the words, *O when wilt thou come unto me!* There are some who think it probable, from this expression, that this psalm was penned during the contest between Ishboeth and David, before he was established king over all Israel. I rather apprehend, says Dr. Chandler, that it was composed soon after that event; but whilst he was not yet firmly settled on the throne, and had not power enough to exert himself in the punishment of great offenders; as he himself complains: "*I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too hard for me,* (2 Sam. iii. 39.) that I cannot act as I would, and punish them according to their demerits." What therefore the Psalmist earnestly wished and desired was, that God would so favour him as to strengthen his hands, that he might be able to exercise justice impartially, and act agreeably to those wise and good maxims which he had laid down for the future good government of his people. An absent friend is little capable of assisting us. To do us real service, in many cases he must come to and favour us with his presence; and therefore the expression, *O when wilt thou come unto me!* is figurative, and must be explained of God's protecting and assisting him, as though he came to and was personally present with him, as he certainly is with all that trust him. *With a perfect heart*, in the next clause, is literally, *in the integrity of my heart*. The meaning is, "I will manage all my affairs as impartial truth and judgment shall direct me; and by my example encourage piety, holiness, and virtue, among all my domestics, dependants, and courtiers."

Ver. 3. *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.*] Pleasure or displeasure, approbation or abhorrence, may be known by the look or cast of the eye. What we are pleased and delighted with, attracts and fixes the eye. What we dislike or hate, we turn away from the sight of: Thus when the Psalmist resolves that he would not fix his eyes upon any evil thing, he means that he would never give it the least countenance or encouragement, but treat it with displeasure, as what he hated and was determined to punish: for he adds, *I hate the work of them that turn aside.* Mr. Schultens has shewn, that the word rendered *turn aside* has a much stronger and more significant meaning; that it is used of an unruly horse, which champs upon the bit through its fiery impatience; and when applied to a bad man, denotes one impatient of all restraint; of unbridled passions, and who is headstrong and ungovernable in the gratification of them; trampling on all the obligations of religion and virtue. Such as these are the deserved objects of the dislike of all good men, whose deviations and presumptuous crimes they detest; none of which shall cleave to them: they will not harbour the love of, or incli-

4 A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked *person*.

5 Whofo privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart, will not I suffer.

6 Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my fight.

8 I will early destroy all the wicked of the

land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

P S A L. CII.

The Prophet in his prayer maketh a grievous complaint: he taketh comfort in the eternity and mercy of God. The mercies of God are to be recorded: he sustaineth his weakness by the unchangeableness of God.

A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

HEAR my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee.

inclination to them, nor commit or encourage the practice of them. Chandler.

Ver. 4. A froward heart shall depart from me] Perverse hearts shall depart from me: I will not protect him who is evil. The word ופסו ikhesb, rendered perverse, signifies a man of a subtle disposition, who can twist and twine himself into all manner of shapes, and who has no truth or principle to be depended upon. "I will never regard, own, or treat such a one as my favourite and friend," says David, any more than if I had never known "him."

*Ver. 5. Whofo privily slandereth his neighbour] Those who are advanced to places of eminent dignity, trust, and profit, are the objects of hatred and envy; frequently traduced and slandered; and the worst kinds of suspicions are insinuated concerning them into the minds of those princes who employ them, in order to supplant and ruin them. It is the part of a good and prudent prince, utterly to discountenance such false and treacherous informers; and none but the worst have favoured and protected them. We learn from Tacitus, that under Tiberius they were encouraged; while Titus scourged them, sold many of them for slaves, and banished others. See Tac. Annal. lib. iv. cap. 30. Suet. Tit. cap. viii. The original words of the next clause, literally rendered, run thus, *High in eyes, and broad in heart*. Haughtiness and pride discover themselves in the elevation or tossing of the nose (Ps. x. 4.) and by the disdainful turning of the eye; scorning as it were to look down upon the object, as unworthy of regard; which is also expressed Prov. xxi. 4. By the *height of the eyes* is shewn the character of him who, because of his superior riches and power, scorns to take notice of one whom he thinks beneath him. To this answers *the wide or broad in heart*; one whose heart dilates and swells itself with pride, on account of the largeness of his fortune, or the eminence of his station. It should be remarked however, that as the heart may be dilated with other things besides pride, so the phrase is used in a good sense, to denote the enlargement of the heart or mind with *pleasure*; Isai. lx. 5. or with *wisdom*; 1 Kings, iv. 29. and with other things of the like nature. Chandler.*

Ver. 6. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful] In the third verse he resolved, that he would set no wicked thing before his eyes: Here he informs us what he would particularly set his eyes on, and who the persons were whom he would

encourage with his smiles, and look on with an affectionate regard; namely, *The faithful in the land*; men of piety, probity, and virtue: These should *sit or dwell* with him. He would use them as his familiars and friends, employ them in the domestic services of his palace, and advance them to public offices and stations in his kingdom. This is a circumstance which Pliny mentions particularly in honour of the emperor Trajan, in his panegyric, ch. v.

*Ver. 8. I will early destroy all the wicked] Literally, In the mornings I will destroy, &c. He resolves to devote all his mornings to the administration of justice, and the punishment of incorrigible offenders. This is a season most proper in itself for the management of all business, and which was generally appropriated to the administration of public affairs by princes and great men; as we learn from 2 Sam. xv. 2. Jer. xxi. 12. When the Psalmist adds, *that I may cut off, or rather, till I have cut off all evil doers from the city of the Lord*, it is, I think, an evident proof that he was now king over all Israel, and in possession of Jerusalem, styled by him *the city of the Lord*; because it was now the place of Jehovah's peculiar residence, as David had lodged the ark in the midst of the tabernacle prepared for its reception: Dr. Chandler; who observes, that this psalm affords an admirable lesson for princes, to direct themselves in the administration of their affairs in public and private life. They should be the patrons of piety and virtue, and encourage them by their own example and practice. Those of their household, their servants, ministers, and particularly their favourites and friends, should be of unblameable characters, and, if possible, eminent for every thing which is excellent and praise-worthy. Subtle and fraudulent men, backbiters and slanderers, and private informers against others, they should detest, and should shew the utmost marks of displeasure to them. They should maintain the honour of the laws, and impartially punish all transgressors against them; and instead of indulging in ease, and being engrossed and dissipated by pleasure and amusement, they should consecrate a just portion of their time to the public service and promoting the real happiness of the people. Thus they will be indeed truly *patriot kings*, honoured of God, and esteemed and beloved of men.*

P S A L. CII.

Title. תפילה לעני tephillah leani.] This prayer of the afflicted was probably written by Nehemiah in the

2 Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call, answer me speedily.

3 For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.

4 My heart is smitten and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.

5 By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin.

6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert.

7 I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top.

8 Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.

9 For I have eaten ashes like bread, and

mingled my drink with weeping,

10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

11 My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.

12 But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.

13 Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come.

14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.

15 So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

16 When the LORD shall build up Zion,

time of the captivity (see Neh. i. 3, &c.) for the use of himself and other pious persons, who lamented the desolation of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the temple: though at the same time they had comfortable hopes that the nations round about should shortly see their wonderful restoration, and thereby be invited to embrace their religion, which was a lively emblem of the coming of the Gentiles into the church of Christ, the eternity of whose kingdom is foretold in the conclusion of this psalm. Mudge is of opinion, from the 13th verse, that it was composed about the time that God had promised a restoration to his people; i. e. after a term of 70 years; and that this was a form of prayer directed to be used by every particular person in the captivity.

Ver. 3. *For my days are consumed like smoke*] Or, according to the original *שׁוּן* *beashan*, in smoke. "My afflictions have had the same effect upon me, as smoke has on things which are hung up in it; i. e. have dried me up, and deformed me." *As an hearth*, is rendered by some *as dry wood*; which is most applicable to the subject here spoken of. The bones being burned up as dry wood, denotes the speedy exhausting of the radical moisture, which soon ends in the consumption of the whole body.

Ver. 4. *So that I forget*] *Because I forget*. Green. Mudge joins the end of this to the next verse, *I forget to eat my bread for the voice of my groaning*.

Ver. 6. *I am like a pelican of the wilderness*] There are two species of pelicans, one of which lives in the water, upon fish; the other in the wilderness, upon serpents and reptiles. By the *owl of the desert*, many understand the *bittern*; and by the *bird* which sits solitary on the house-top, the *owl*. Houbigant, instead of *sparrow alone*, reads, *the solitary bird*; and for *pelican*, *onocrotalus*. See Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 427. Bochart's works, vol. iii. p. 272. and Watson's Animal World displayed, p. 242.

Ver. 8. *And they that are mad against me, &c.*] *And my*

slanders, &c. Mudge renders, *And in their madness swear against me*; and Green, *The insolent boasters use my name in their oaths*: ver. 9. *Because I eat ashes, &c.*: ver. 10. *On account of thy indignation and wrath, &c.* According to him, the phrase, *Use my name in their oaths*, means, "Their form of swearing is this; if we break our oaths, may the gods pour down their vengeance upon us, and make us as miserable as this captive Jew!"

Ver. 9. *For I have eaten ashes*] The serpent in Genesis is condemned to go on his belly, and to eat dust, to which his prone posture inevitably subjects him. Casting ashes upon themselves, or rolling themselves in ashes, was a ceremony to express deep distress and sorrow among the Orientals; and if we may suppose that the Psalmist lay prostrate upon the ground in his sorrow, he might be said literally to eat ashes, as well as the serpent is said to eat dust; and his affliction must be highly aggravated in our ideas by such an image as this. See Boch. Hieroz. l. iv. c. 2.

Ver. 11. *My days are like a shadow that declineth*] *My days are as a shadow which is gone down*. The shadow which is gone down, seems not so much to describe a common shadow, as the shadow of a dial; which in that of Ahaz is said to go down, (the same original word) as the hour goes on. Mudge.

Ver. 13. *Yea, the set time is come*] The time fixed for the continuance of the Babylonish captivity was 70 years. The *set*, or *fixed time*, here seems to mean, the time appointed for the restoration of the people, and the rebuilding of the temple. See Jeremiah, xxxix. 10, 11, and the first note on this psalm.

Ver. 14. *For thy servants take pleasure, &c.*] *Thy servants also bear an affection to her ruins, and commiserate her dust*: Green; in conformity to the version of the Liturgy of the church of England, as well as to many of the ancient versions.

Ver. 15—17. *So the heathen shall fear the name, &c.*] *Then shall the nations fear thy name, O Lord*;—ver. 16. *When the Lord shall have built up Zion, and his glory shall again*

he shall appear in his glory.

17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

18 This shall be written for the generation to come : and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.

19 For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary ; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth ;

20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner ; to loose those that are appointed to death ;

21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem ;

22 When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

23 He weakened my strength in the way ;

he shortened my days.

24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days : thy years *are* throughout all generations.

25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands.

26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure : yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed :

27 But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end.

28 The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.

again be seen in Jerusalem ;—*ver.* 17. *When he shall have regarded the prayer of the destitute, and not have rejected their petition.* See Bishop Hare, and Green.

Ver. 18. *And the people which shall be created, &c.]* And the people to be born shall praise the Lord. Mudge ; who reads the two next verses in a parenthesis.—*Ver.* 19. *(When the Lord looketh out from the height of his holiness ; from the heaven he beholdeth the earth.—Ver.* 20. *To hear, &c.)—Ver.* 21. *In order to record in Zion the name, &c.* The words, *this shall be written*, seem to intend the particular case of this prayer of the prisoner ; that it should be written for times to come, in order to publish the glory of the Lord at Jerusalem ; when the whole Gentile world should be assembled there to do him homage.

Ver. 23. *He weakened my strength]* The connection is this, “ Notwithstanding these glorious hopes of being speedily restored to my native country, I find that through continual afflictions God hath weakened my strength, even whilst I thought that I was in the way to that happiness ; and that on account of the short remainder of my life I shall not be able to attain it.” But he goes on, “ Though I do not live to have any share in the public joy for that restoration ; yet thou, who art an everlasting and immutable God, whose years are throughout all generations, wilt not fail to make those who survive me happy therein.”

Ver. 25. *Of old hast thou laid the foundation, &c.]* See Mai. li. 6. where the prophet tells us, that the heaven and earth shall wax old like a garment ; but the Psalmist here goes one step further than the prophet ; and not only acquaints us that the heavens and the earth shall wax old as a garment, but, like a worn-out garment, shall be changed for new—What, but the new heavens and the new earth, mentioned by St. Peter in the New Testament, and said to be the expectation of believers, according to God’s promise ?—See 2 Pet. iii. 13. and Peters on Job, p. 413.

Ver. 26. *As a vesture shalt thou change them]* This refers to changes of raiment. God should invest himself with new heavens, as a man would change his garment. This

passage is quoted by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. i. 12. who has followed the LXX in reading ; *Thou shalt fold them up.*

Ver. 28. *The children of thy servants]* *Let the sons of thy servants be settled, and their seed be established before thee.* This is a concluding prayer that their posterity might be settled in Jerusalem for ever : *Before thee, or in thy presence*, belongs in common to both clauses.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, This psalm is a prayer of the afflicted, and such are many of the people of God at times ; when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord, as he is invited freely to do, assured that the compassionate bosom of his God can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; he will hear his cry, and will help him ; and this inestimable privilege the child of God fails not to improve, and therefore lodges all his complaints with the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation. This the afflicted Psalmist did, and in his own case directs us how to act when under the like pressure.

He directs his prayer to God, intreating kind regard and a speedy answer, because his necessities were urgent. *Note ;* (1.) Outward troubles are made light, when God comforts the soul with internal consolations. (2.) If God suffers his people to be reduced very low, it is with a design to exercise their faith, and excite their more importunate prayers.

2dly, Many and great are the troubles of the righteous, but out of all the Lord delivereth them : and herein the Psalmist expresses his own confidence, and that of all the faithful in Zion.

1. The Lord Jesus is an everlasting Saviour ; for to him are the words addressed (Heb. i. 10—12.). *Thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever.* However long continued the afflictions of his faithful ones may be, they shall outlive and overcome them, because he endureth for ever. The stability of his mediatorial kingdom, and his fidelity in the constant discharge of his trust, as our ceaseless Advocate and almighty King, ensure to faithful souls the victory at last : *and thy remembrance unto all generations ; seeing*

P S A L. CIII.

An exhortation to praise God for his mercy, and for the constancy thereof.

A Psalm of David.

BLESS the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me *blefs* his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

seeing he shall be exalted to eternity in the praises of his faithful people, for all the great salvation begun, continued, and completed by him, for them, and in them.

2. There is an appointed time for the continuance and removal of the afflictions of Zion; and faith, which knows it certain, brings it near: and it may be hastened by prayer. *The set time is come*, because the deliverance is as sure as if it were already accomplished: and this may have respect to the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity, or to the period of the church's calamity under the persecutions of Antichrist; or more generally to the case of every suffering faint of God, who is called to trust and wait in patient hope for the salvation of God.

3. This will issue to the glory of God, and the great comfort of his people. *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.* Though the temple lay in ruins, the pious Jews loved the place, and respected the very dust: how great must their delight then be, to see these stones revived from the rubbish, and growing into a holy temple? And thus the ministers of the gospel, in all the desolations of the church, long for the glorious day of restitution; and whenever the Lord puts it into the hearts of his people to pray for, and labour to serve the interests of his Zion, it is a gracious sign that the promised mercy is at hand. Herein also God will be abundantly glorified; his saints will admire and adore him for the grace manifested in that great day; and the heathen, struck with reverence at the sight of God's interposition in behalf of his people, shall be converted unto him, and the kings of the earth behold his glory, and yield themselves up to his service.

4. The prayers of the righteous shall be answered. They are frequently *destitute* of human help and comfort, but not the less dear to the Lord: he will not despise those whom man despiseth; but, as the contrite heart is his delight, they shall be accepted by him, and receive from him a rich supply of every want.

5. The record of this mercy shewn to Zion at the humble prayer of God's people, will encourage the faith, and excite the praises of succeeding generations of the righteous, created anew in Christ Jesus. *Note;* The past experience of God's care of his people should ever encourage our confidence of the like protection.

6. Even the groans of the poor prisoners doomed to death he hears, rescues them from ruin, and magnifies thereby his mercy. *He hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary: from heaven did the Lord behold the earth,* and all that was done under the sun, with an eye of especial regard to his believing people, particularly when suffering for his name's sake, under the power of oppressors: *To bear the groaning of the prisoner,* bound for the testimony of

God, and the faith of Jesus, as multitudes have been, and some still continue to be, under the power of the anti-christian tyranny: *To loose those that are appointed to death;* either to rescue them from the death of the body, or to save the souls of those who were tied and bound with the chain of their sins, and in their own fears apprehended themselves exposed to the eternal death of body and soul in hell; but who under deep conviction of their lost estate, groaning in bitterness, cry and are heard, pardoned through the blood of Jesus, and saved by almighty grace: *To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;* as the captives released from Babylon did, and as the church of God, delivered from the yoke of Antichrist, will do; and which is now daily done by every poor sinner rescued from the bondage of corruption, and the jaws of hell; whose heart, big with thankfulness, adores the wonders of redeeming love, and ascribes the praise of all to Jesus his Lord; *when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord,* which will be most eminently the case, when the Lord Jesus in the latter day shall take to himself his great power, and reign; and those who are the subjects of his happy government shall with exultation rejoice in his kingdom and glory.

P S A L. CIII.

Title. לָרֹדֵד *ledavid*] This is one of the psalms of David, which it is supposed was written by him after his recovery from a great illness. See Delaney, book iv. chap. 7. It may be so; but, as we read of no illness that he had, it is by no means clear whether such was the occasion of it, or whether he composed it after a deliverance from some other calamity. It contains a thankful acknowledgment of the great and abundant mercies of God, especially that of pardoning sin, and not exacting the punishment due to it, and is an exquisite performance, very applicable to every deliverance: it may properly be said to describe the wonders of grace, as the following psalm describes the wonders of nature.

Ver. 3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities] Diseases were generally considered, under the Mosaic dispensation, as the punishment of iniquities; and therefore the healing of his diseases is mentioned as the consequence of the forgiveness of his sins. We cannot have a more full and satisfactory comment on this passage, than the frequent cures wrought by our Saviour on the bodies of men, emblematical of the cure of their spiritual diseases. See particularly the case of the paralytic, Matt. ix. 2, &c.

Ver. 5. So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's] Dr. Delaney observes, that it is generally understood of the eagle, when his feathers moult and fall off gradually and new ones succeed, that his youth is renewed with his plumage;

6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

13 Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.

15 *As for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all:

20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

plumage; and "I am well assured, (says he,) that these feathers fall by pairs, one in each wing; and that those which fall at once are the two feathers exactly corresponding to each other in each wing; and that this pair is renewed by a new growth, before the next pair falls: a plain appointment of providential wisdom and goodness! for by thus preserving the exact balance of the wings, which a very little inequality (the difference of less than half a feather) in either would destroy, the eagle is never utterly disabled from pursuing his prey; though it be evident, he cannot pursue it with full vigour, till all his feathers be renewed; and therefore his youth is then said to be restored." The fact is, that all birds have yearly their moulting-time, when they shed their old, and are afresh furnished with a new stock of feathers. This is most observable of hawks and vultures, and especially of eagles; which, when they are near one hundred years old, cast their feathers, and become bald like young ones, and then new feathers sprout out.

Ver. 8. The Lord is merciful and gracious] It is astonishing, after a sentence like this, that any persons should be so blinded by their zeal for infidelity, as to represent the God of the Hebrews as a *severe, cruel, pitiless,* and vindictive monarch. See Chandler's *Life of David*, vol. i. p. 6.

Ver. 11—13. For as the heaven is high, &c.] There cannot be a nobler amplification of the divine mercy and placability than that contained in the 11th and 12th verses: and what can equal the tenderness ascribed to our paternal Creator in the 13th? One would think it impossible, if daily experience did not convince us to the contrary, that human creatures should be regardless of such love, and ungrateful to so solicitous a benefactor! For my own part, I can hardly conceive it possible for any

heart to be unaffected or uninfluenced by such a composition as this before us.

Ver. 19. The Lord hath prepared] *Hath established.*

Ver. 20. Harkening unto the voice of his word] *As soon as he speaks the word.* Green. Hebrew. *Hearing, or upon hearing the voice of his word.* Merrick renders it:

Who, cloath'd with light, his word obey,
And wing, as he directs, your way.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, When God opens our hearts to a real discovery of what he is to us, and hath done for us, we are overwhelmed with wonder, and filled with thanksgiving. Thus the Psalmist (and with him every living servant of God)

1. Stirs up his soul to the grateful work of praise. *Bless the Lord, O my soul*; proclaim his goodness and grace; and all that is within me, let every faculty be engaged, and every nerve extended, to *bless his holy name*, so worthy to be praised. *Bless the Lord, O my soul*; delay not, nor be sluggish in the service; and *forget not all his benefits*, the least, so infinitely beyond our deserts, and yet the whole so great and numberless, that they are more than we are able to express. *Note*, (1.) It is good often to commune with our own hearts, and stir them up to the needful work of gratitude. (2.) God deserves our heart, our whole heart; and every saint of God longs for still more of the love of God. (3.) We are strangely apt to forget God's benefits, and have much reason to be deeply humbled at all times, that we are so unduly affected with the sense of them, and so little thankful for them.

2. He enumerates a variety of particulars, for which his soul was bound to bless and praise God. [1.] *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities*: great, numberless, aggravated as they have been, he forgives them, through Jesus, freely and fully. [2.] *Who healeth all thy diseases*. Sunk under a complication of miseries is the fallen spirit; diseased in every

21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all

every faculty; fatally sick, beyond the power of human medicine to recover; but there is balm in Gilead, and a physician there. He who is able to forgive all our sins, can heal all our spiritual maladies by the power of his grace; and every believing soul feels this, in a measure, by blessed experience, and praises the divine physician. [3.] *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.* Eternal ruin, because of our sins, awaited us, and hell yawned ready to receive the guilty wretch; but Jesus interposed, paid the immense ransom, stayed us from going down to the pit, and opened the gates of life and immortality to the lost and perishing. For this great redemption praise the Lord, O my soul! [4.] *Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies;* with a glorious measure of those infinite blessings contained in the covenant of grace. [5.] *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things;* so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's: good things of a temporal nature; health, prosperity, long life, and juvenile vigour, even to old age: good things of a spiritual nature; satisfying the hungerings and thirstings of the heart with those rich supplies of righteousness and grace in Jesus, which enable us with vigour, delight, and zeal, to run the way of God's commandments; and when coldness and decay would creep upon us, he renews our strength; so that in the liveliness and activity of our souls, even in old age, we mount up with wings as eagles; Isa. xl. 31.

2dly, Not only the Psalmist's praises were excited by his own mercies, but he felt the kindness shown to others as done to himself.

1. He praises God for his general care over the poor and oppressed, whose patron he was ever found, and whose wrongs, sooner or later, he would vindicate.

2. He adores him for the peculiar favour ever shewn to his Israel, [1.] In revealing to them his mind and will; committing to them his lively oracles; in all the divinely-instituted ordinances of his worship, which he delivered to Moses, instructing them in the way of salvation; and in all his acts of power and grace exerted for them, engaging their trust in him, and love towards him. [2.] In his patience and pardoning mercy shown to his believing people, notwithstanding their former provocations. His nature is mercy, and his bosom the seat of tender compassion. Slow to anger, he is ever ready to forgive: yea, when for our good he is compelled to chide, to visit our offences with the rod, and our sin with scourges, his paternal heart yearns over our sufferings; he is in haste to fall on the necks of his returning prodigals, and turn away from his wrathful indignation; to restore comfort to his mourners, and seal their pardon and peace with the kisses of his love. Had we our deserts indeed, we had long since lain down in everlasting burnings; but far other have been his dealings with us: his rich grace pardons our innumerable offences. High as the heavens are above the earth, so vast and boundless is his mercy; and far as the east is from the west, so far hath he put away our iniquities: they are forgiven, yea, forgotten; sunk as a stone

in the abyfs of his infinite love. He knows our feeble frame, the *weakness of our bodies*, which would be crushed as the moth, if he laid for a moment his heavy hand upon us: *the infirmity of our flesh*, so impotent to good, so prone to evil; and therefore he pities us, as the tenderest father the child of his love. *Note;* (1.) If God's pity to us be so great, let us learn of him to exercise the like compassion towards each other. (2.) They who have a real sense of their own deserts must ever stand amazed at themselves that they are out of hell. (3.) God's pardons are free and full; the greatest dishonour we can shew him is, to distrust his promises and question his grace.

3. The character of the people of God, towards whom this love and kindness is manifested, is set forth; or rather this mercy shewn them engages their hearts to him. *They fear him;* not with that fear which hath bondage, but with that filial fear which springs from the spirit of adoption. *They keep his covenant;* live upon the inestimably precious promises of it; make it all their salvation, and all their desire; and, renouncing every other hope and confidence, depend alone on the merits of their Redeemer: and they withal *remember his commandments to do them;* steady to their obligations, and desiring to approve themselves obedient children to the Father of Mercies.

3dly, And lastly, We have,

1. God's eternal kingdom and glory set forth, as an engagement to universal adoration of him. In heaven his radiant throne is placed, *prepared, or established, fixed and immoveable,* and his dominion universal; for *his kingdom ruleth over all;* angels, men, yea, devils, and all in heaven, earth, and hell, are subject to his government, and must submit to his disposals.

2. A call to render to this glorious Jehovah the universal praise due unto his name. [1.] Let the brightest and noblest creatures lead the way; and angels and archangels, his waiting hosts, his attendant ministers, mighty in power to fulfil his high behests, deep in attention to his commanding word, let them begin the song, and bless their great Creator. [2.] Let all the hosts of earth, the great congregation of the righteous, unite their hearts and voices in his praise; especially his ministers of flame, whom he hath intrusted with his gospel, and sent to spread the knowledge of his grace and good-will to men. [3.] Let all his works spread forth his glory; the heavens above, with all their shining orbs; the world beneath, with every creature, animate or inanimate, which moves or grows, or dwells in air, earth, or sea, all, all must learn to bless and praise. [4.] Shall then my soul, O Lord, alone be solitary and silent amidst the universal shout of thanksgiving? No; *bless the Lord, O my soul!* every day, still increasing, more constant, more enlarged; while life and breath endure, may my bosom swell with gratitude, my lips be filled with praise, the earnest and beginning of those unceasing praises, which shall be the everlasting employment and the unutterable joy of every faithful soul in the regions of eternal bliss and glory.

P S A L. CIV.

A meditation upon the mighty power and wonderful providence of God. God's glory is eternal. The prophet voweth perpetually to praise God.

BLESS the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty:

2 Who coverest thyself with light as with a

garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

5 Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

P S A L. CIV.

THOUGH this psalm has no title in the original, it is said to be David's by all the old versions, except the Chaldee; and certainly the thoughts and expressions of it throughout, and especially in the first part of it, are so lofty and grand, that they may well be supposed the composition of the Royal Prophet. However, be the author who he will, it is universally allowed to be one of the finest poems that we have upon the works of creation and the providence of God: and as it is upon so general a subject, it is proper to be used at all times. Bishop Lowth observes, that there is nothing extant which can be conceived more perfect than this psalm. See his 29th Prelection. Dr. Delaney imagines it, with great probability, to have been composed by David while he was in the forest of Hareth, where he was surrounded by those pastoral scenes which he so beautifully describes; for, after some general observations upon the works and wisdom of God in the creation, he descends to the following particulars: the rise of springs, the course of rivers, the retreats of fowls and wild beasts of the forests and mountains; the vicissitudes of night and day, and their various uses to the animal world; the dependance of the whole creation upon the Almighty for being and subsistence. He withdraws their breath, and they die; he breathes, and they revive; he but opens his hand, and he feeds; he satisfies them all at once. These are ideas familiar to him, and his manner of introducing them plainly shews them to be the effect of his most retired meditations in his solitary wanderings. Life of David, book i. chap. 8.

Ver. 2. The heavens like a curtain.] Like a tilt—a tent. Or, Like a canopy. Mudge. A tent seems the most proper translation, as comprehending, not the uppermost part of the tent or the canopy only, but the whole tent, both canopy and curtains: for by that the air which encompasseth the earth is most fitly resembled, in respect of us here below, for whose use it is that God has thus extended or stretched it out; as doing that by his secret and invisible virtue, which in tents used to be done by cords.

Ver. 3. Who layeth the beams of his chambers.] He flooreth his chambers with waters: i. e. "The clouds make the flooring of his heavens." Mudge. By these chambers are meant, though not the supreme, yet the superior or middle regions of the air. It is here described as an upper story in a house, laid firm with beams; (accounting the earth, and the region of air around it, as the lowest story:) and this floor is here poetically said to be laid in the waters; i. e. in watery clouds. Now, whereas in the building of an upper story there must be some walls or

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pillars to support the weight of it, and on which the beams must be laid; God here, by his own miraculous power, laid, and hath ever since supported, these upper rooms; there being nothing but waters to support them; a fluid unstable body, incapable of supporting itself. This therefore is another work of his divine power; that the waters, which are so fluid, and unable to contain themselves within their own bounds, should yet hang in the middle of the air, and be as walls or pillars to support that region of air, which is itself another fluid body. Mr. Hervey observes very well, that in the words, *Who walketh upon the wings of the wind*, there is an unequalled elegance; not he *flies*—he *runneth*, but—he *walketh*; and that on the very wings of the wind; on the most impetuous element, raised into the utmost rage, and sweeping along with incredible rapidity. We cannot have a more sublime idea of the Deity; serenely walking on an element of inconceivable swiftness, and, as it seems to us, uncontrollable impetuosity!

Ver. 5. Who laid the foundations of the earth.] Who hath built the earth upon her bases. Bishop Lowth, in his 8th Prelection, of images taken from things sacred, observes, that we have a remarkable example hereof in this psalm. "The exordium (says he) is peculiarly magnificent, wherein the majesty of God is described, so far as we can investigate and comprehend it from the admirable construction of nature: in which passage, as it was for the most part necessary to use translatitious images, the sacred poet has principally applied those which would be esteemed by the Hebrews the most elevated and worthy such an argument; for they all, as it seems to me, are taken from the tabernacle. We will give the passage verbally, with a short explication. In the first place he expresses the greatness of God in proper words; then he uses metaphorical ones:

: הוֹד וְהִדָּר לְבִשָּׁתָּהּ *hod vehadhar labashtah*

"Thou hast put on honour and majesty:

לבשתה labashtah is a word very frequently used in the dress of the priests.

"Covering himself with light as with a garment:

"A manifest symbol of the divine presence; the light, conspicuous in the holiest, is pointed out under the same idea; and from this single example a simile is deduced to express the ineffable glory of God generally and universally.

: נֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּירְעָהּ *notah shamaim kai'ereah*

"Stretching out the heavens like a curtain:

"The word *כירעה*, rendered *curtain*, is that which denotes the curtains, or covering of the whole tabernacle.

G g

6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as *with* a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the vallies unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

10 He sendeth the springs into the vallies, *which* run among the hills.

11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches:

13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

15 And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.

16 The trees of the LORD are full of *sap*; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

הַמְקָרָה בְּמֵי עֲלִיּוֹתָיו *hammekareh bammaim aliothaviv.*

"Laying the beams of his chambers in the waters.

"The sacred writer expresses the wonderful nature of the air, aptly and regularly constructed from various and flux elements into one continued and stable series, by a metaphor drawn from the singular formation of the tabernacle; which, consisting of many different parts, and easily reparable when there was need, was kept together by a perpetual juncture and contiguation of them all together. The poet goes on:

הַשֵּׁם עֲבִים רְכוּבוֹ *hassam abim rekubo.*

הַמְהַלֵּךְ עַל כַּנְפֵי רוּחַ *hammeballek al kanpei ruach.*

"Making the clouds his chariot;

"Walking upon the wings of the wind.

"He had first expressed an image of the divine majesty, such as it resided in the holy of holies, discernible by a certain investiture of the most splendid light. He now denotes the same from that sight of itself, which the divine majesty exhibited, when it moved together with the ark, sitting on a circumambient cloud, and carried on high through the air: the feat of the divine presence is even called by the sacred historians, as its proper name, הַמְרַכְבָּה *hamerchabah*, that is, a chariot.

"Causing the winds to be his angels,

"And the flaming fire to be in the place of his ministers.

עָשָׂה מְשָׁרְתָיו רֹחוֹת *oufsh maluakiv ruchoth.*

מְשָׁרְתָיו אֵשׁ לֶהֱטֹ: *meshartav eish lebet.*

"The elements are described prompt and expedite to perform the divine commands, like angels or ministers serving in the tabernacle; the Hebrew מְשָׁרְתָיו *meshartav*, being a word most common in the sacred ministrations.

יָסַד אֶרֶץ עַל מְכוּנָהּ *iasad eretz al mekoneibah.*

"He hath also founded the earth upon its bases:

"This also is manifestly taken from the same. The poet adds,

בַּל תִּמּוֹט עוֹלָם וָעַד *bal timmot olam vaged.*

"That it should not be removed for ever:

"That is, till the time appointed according to the will of

"God. As the condition of each was the same in this respect; so the stability of the sanctuary, in turn, is in almost the same words elsewhere compared with the stability of the earth."

Ver. 6. *Thou coveredst it with the deep, &c.*] That is, at the first creation, the earth, while yet *without form*, was covered all over, and, as it were, clothed with the great deep; that vast expansion of air and waters; and those which are now the highest mountains, were then all under that liquid element. He adds, ver. 7. *At thy rebuke they fled; they*, namely, the inferior waters, (see Gen. i. 9.) which were all gathered together into one place: *At thy rebuke*, i. e. at the powerful command of God; which, as it were, rebuked, and thereby corrected and regulated, that indigested confusion of things. *At the voice of thy thunder*, means, "Thy powerful voice, which resounded like thunder."

Ver. 8. *They go up to the mountains*] *They went up mountains, they went down vallies, to the place which thou hast founded for them.* Here a noble image is lost in our translation, for want of considering that the sacred writer is describing the motion of the waters over mountains and in vallies, when, at God's command, they filed off from the surface of the earth unto the posts assigned them. Mudge. This psalm will gain great light by being compared with the first chapter of Genesis, and considered as a kind of comment upon it.

Ver. 11. *The wild asses quench their thirst*] It is particularly remarked of the asses, that though they are dull and stupid creatures, yet by Providence they are taught the way to the waters in the dry and sandy deserts; and that there is no better guide for the thirsty traveller to follow, than to observe the herds of them descending to the streams. The description here is very picturesque, of fine springs in the midst of shady vallies, frequented by a variety of beasts and birds, allured thither by the pleasantness of the place, and giving a kind of life and society to it. See ver. 12.

Ver. 13. *The earth is satisfied, &c.*] *That the earth may be satiated with the fruit of thy works:* ver. 14. *to cause the grass to grow, &c.* Mudge.

Ver. 16. *Are full of sap*] Or, *Shall be satisfied.*

17 Where the birds make their nests : *as for* the stork, the fir-trees *are* her house.

18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats ; *and* the rocks for the conies.

19 He appointed the moon for seasons : the sun knoweth his going down.

20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night : wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth*.

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

23 Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches.

25 *So is* this great and wide sea, wherein *are* things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships : *there is* that levia-

than, *whom* thou hast made to play therein.

27 These wait all upon thee ; that thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season.

28 *That* thou givest them they gather : thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled : thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created : and thou renewest the face of the earth.

31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever : the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth : he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live : I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet : I will be glad in the LORD.

Ver. 18. The rocks for the conies] See Lev. xi. 5. The meaning of the Psalmist is, that even those parts of the earth which may seem barren and useless have yet their uses, and serve to shelter certain animals which are adapted to them. None, says Dr. Delaney, but one who had surveyed the venerable shade and stupendous size of the cedars of Libanus, could entertain those exalted conceptions of them which David here does : that they were *planted by the hand of God*, ver. 16. None but one who had been himself refuged in the *hills of the wild goats*, could so well, and so familiarly, contemplate upon the ends of the divine wisdom in forming these solitary sanctuaries. It were endless to enumerate particulars ; and I shall only beg leave to add, that none but one well acquainted with the fierce inhabitants of the forest, their roving and roarings, could so describe them, as David doth in verses 20, 21, and 22.

Ver. 19. He appointed the moon for seasons] See Gen. i. 14.

Ver. 21. The young lions roar after their prey] Dr. Hammond observes, that lions are not provided with great swiftness of foot to pursue those beasts on which they prey. It is necessary, therefore, that this defect should be provided for some other way ; and it has been affirmed, that their *very roaring* is useful to them for this purpose ; and that when they cannot overtake their prey, they do by that fierce noise so astonish and terrify the poor beasts, that they fall down before them. This seems probable enough, and illustrates the Psalmist's expression. The prophet Amos has the same allusion, ch. iii. 4. *Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey ?* i. e. when he hath no prey in view.

Ver. 25. So is this great and wide sea, &c.]. *So is the sea,*

great and wide in extent, wherein are moving things, both small and great animals. Mudge.

Ver. 26. That leviathan] See Job, xli.

Ver. 28. Thou openest thine hand] The ideas in these verses can be excelled by nothing but by the concise elegance of the expressions ; which convey to the human mind the most sublime and awful conceptions of that tremendous Being, *who doth but look on the earth, and it trembleth ; who doth but touch the hills, and they smoke* ; ver. 32. The Psalmist alludes in the latter clause to God's descent on mount Sinai.

Ver. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet] *I shall delight in making him my theme.* Mudge. It is literally, *My theme upon him will be sweet.* The next verse may be rendered, *While the sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked shall be no more, &c.* The reader desirous of seeing a more complete and philosophical comment on this psalm, will find such a one in the 7th Volume of Scheuchzer's *Physique Sacrée*.

REFLECTIONS. 1st, One page of the holy Scriptures contains more of the true sublime than is to be found in all the volumes of poets and philosophers ; of which this psalm is a striking instance ; where majesty of diction, vastness of idea, and the transcendently dazzling brightness of the images, conspire to fill the soul with sacred reverence and awe of the Divine Majesty, whose glory passes before us.

1. The Psalmist calls upon his own soul to awake, to praise Jehovah, Jesus ; *Very great* in his divine person ; in his amazing works of creation, providence, and grace ; and in his distinguished offices ; *clothed with honour and majesty* ; the object of universal adoration in earth and heaven ;

35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

heaven; and, what above all engages the heart, *my God*, in all whose greatness and glory I am interested.

2. He describes the exceeding greatness of his covenant God; before whose majestic presence all human grandeur vanishes, as the glow-worm before the meridian sun. What monarch ever appeared so clothed, so enthroned, so attended? Light itself is his garment, so bright and dazzling, that even angels themselves veil their faces when they approach his footstool, unable to bear the intolerable blaze. The vast expanse of heaven forms the curtains of his pavilion, as easily stretched out at his word, and, when he pleases, as instantly rolled together. Above the firmament his radiant throne is fixed; and those waters which float in the skies are the beams of his chambers. If he comes forth, the clouds, his chariots, wait, and he walketh on the wings of the wind; so swift to succour his people, or pour vengeance on their foes. Bright angels, ministers of flame, spirits disencumbered from the fetters of material substance, stand ready, the creatures of his hand and the willing servants of his pleasure. Fixed by him on a basis immovable, the solid earth abides. The vast abyss of waters, which at creation covered it, at his command halted to the hollow deep, fled over the mountains, and through the vallies retired to their appointed places: there shut up in bounds they cannot pass, the billows toss themselves in vain; since God hath said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Meditate, my soul, on these wonders of power, and ceaseless adore this glorious Jehovah.

2dly, Having mentioned the more august displays of the Divine Majesty in heaven and earth, the Psalmist passes on to consider his bountiful providential care over the world, and the creatures in it, the work of his hands.

1. He sends his rain from the clouds, his chambers, to fill the vast reservoirs in the hills and mountains, from whence the springs burst forth, and descend into the vallies beneath, affording grateful refreshment to the thirsty cattle, and at which even the wild asses quench their thirst. Shall God then so kindly relieve the wants of creatures so worthless, and can we dare distrust him, or fear that he will suffer us to want?

2. By the sides of these flowing streams the birds take up their grateful abode, and sing on the branches, as if attempting to articulate thanksgiving for the provision which God had made. Shall they sing, and man be silent? forbid it, gratitude!

3. By these kind rains also the earth impregnated, teems with vegetative life, well-pleased to bear those fruits which God causes to spring forth, *grafs for the cattle, and herb for the service of man*, for food or physic: a rich provision, not only for necessity but delight: corn, wine, and oil, to strengthen his body, to cheer his spirits, and beautify his countenance. *Note*; (1.) Since we are daily fed by God's bounty, it becomes us to be thankful for the provision, and dependant on his providence. (2.) If God hath given us so many good things, and, far from tantalizing us merely

with the sight, bids us enjoy his blessings, let us beware that we do not, by our abuse, turn that into our curse, which was designed for our comfort.

4. The trees, as well as animals, are fed with their proper nourishment: filled with sap, under God's care they grow; his hand planted them, and he waters them with the dew of heaven. Such are his fountains, planted by his grace, and watered with heavenly influences; full of sap and spiritual life within; increasing with the increase of God; tall as the cedars, and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.

5. By strange instinct the birds are taught to build their nests on the lofty trees, as the places most suitable and safe; and the wild goats, sensible of their defenceless state, choose the high hills and precipices for their abode and refuge; and the feeble and fearful rabbits burrow under the rocks for their shelter. Shall these all shew wisdom in their choice, and shall we be the only fools in nature! Instead of flying to Jesus as our refuge, and making him our munition of rocks, shall we neglect his great salvation, and carelessly stand exposed to every spiritual enemy, till we fall a prey to the destroyer!

3dly, New wonders of God's power and providence afford new matter for our contemplation and praise.

1. The day and night, and the luminaries which preside over them, are the works of his hands: if the sun knoweth his stated seasons of revolution, and the moon in regular order fills and empties her orb with light, it is by Divine appointment, and for the wisest purposes. The night, which affords welcome repose to man, emboldens the creatures on whom the fear of man is impressed to arise in quest of food; the lions, roaring, roam about the forest, and seek their meat from God who feedeth them, and when the sun begins to rear his head they return again to their dens: the welcome morning breaks, and slumbering man awakes; the day is his time for labour, till the shadows of the evening warn him to retire, and recruit with repose his exhausted strength for the labours of another day. *Note*; (1.) If God at the lion's roar provides flesh for his hunger, can it be possible that his own children should cry to him and be refused bread? (2.) In the night of desertion and temptation the roaring lion, Satan, fails not to endeavour to scare the poor distressed soul: but lo! the morning breaks, and before the beams of the sun of righteousness our fears are dispelled, and our enemy driven away. (3.) The day is for labour; a sluggard is an offence to the sun, that wastes on him his glorious light. (4.) The shadows of the evening of death will be welcome to those who have, through Divine grace, finished the work which God had given them to do.

2. The earth with all its riches, and the sea with all its swarms of inhabitants, display the wisdom and power of the great Creator; *there go the ships*, transporting to other lands the various produce of different climes; and there fearless plays on the surface the vast leviathan; whilst all the watery brood which swim or creep, both small and great, depend on their Maker's hand, are fed from day to day,

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An exhortation to praise God, and to seek out his works. The history of God's providence over Abraham, over Joseph, over Jacob in Egypt, over Moses delivering the Israelites, over the Israelites brought out of Egypt, fed in the wilderness, and planted in Canaan.

GIVE thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.

2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.

3 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

4 Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.

5 Remember his marvellous works that he

hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.

7 He is the LORD our God: his judgments are in all the earth.

8 He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations.

9 Which *covenant* he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;

10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant:

11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance:

day, the least not disregarded, the largest liberally supplied, and all are filled with good, receiving the portion suited to their wants. Shall men then be less careful to seek their meat from God, or dare they impatiently murmur against the provision made for them!

3. In his hands they are to live or die; if he withhold their supplies, they pine with hunger; if he command the breath that he gave to depart, they return to their dust. Yet, though death seem to threaten universal desolation, a new creation in succession rises, no species of animals fails; the earth is replenished with inhabitants, renewed daily by the rising sun, and annually by the returning spring.

4. Well might these views make the pious Psalmist cry out, *O Lord! how manifold are thy works!* so vast and various, and withal so exquisitely finished; *in wisdom hast thou made them all:* the works of man will hardly bear inspection, and the microscopic eye descries the foulest flaws in the most finished pieces; but here examination raises the wonder, all is executed beyond the power of imagination to add thereto, or the possibility of finding fault: *as for God, his work is perfect.*

4thly and lastly, We have,

1. The Psalmist's resolution, while he has a being, to give praise to God for all he is in himself, and for the wonders he hath wrought. His glory is everlasting; it will appear not only through time, but to eternity; and glorified saints and angels will for ever adore him. *The Lord shall rejoice in his works,* well pleased on the survey; for all he doth, is well done: and, if he pleased, with one frown he could dissolve all created nature. *He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth,* convulsed with earthquakes: *he toucheth the hills, and straight the fire kindles, they smoke, and burst forth in flames.* Most worthy therefore is he to be praised, who is so greatly to be feared. Let the sinner tremble, who obstinately refuses, or carelessly neglects, to give him the glory due unto his name. If but a touch, a frown, is so terrible, how will the guilty soul endure the fierceness of his wrath, and the lightning down of his indignation?

2. He determines with delight to meditate continually

on all God's wondrous works: his works of providence, and his yet more pleasing works of redemption and grace; the sweetest subject that can engage the believer's thoughts; and as the blest effect of such contemplation, *I will be glad in the Lord;* the reflections will fill his soul with joy, and his lips with praise to his divine and adored Jesus.

3. He foresees the end of the wicked, and prays for the appearing of God's glory in their destruction. *Let the sinners* who obstinately and perseveringly reject God's government, and rob him of his glory, *be consumed out of the earth,* by the stroke of judgment, and the brightness of the Saviour's coming; *and let the wicked,* whose ways are one continued scene of impiety and impenitence, *be no more;* cut off with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. *Note;* The hour is near, when all God's patience with the ungodly shall have an end, and ruin terrible and eternal overtake them.

4. He concludes with calling on his own soul to bless the Lord for his judgments on the wicked, and invites all God's people to join his praises. Here first in the psalms the word *Hallelujah* occurs, and this on occasion of the destruction of the ungodly. It is in the New Testament only found in Rev. xix. 1—6. where it is used on a like occasion. *Note;* The damnation of the finally impenitent will redound to God's glory, as well as the salvation of the faithful, and both afford matter for his saints' everlasting praises.

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IT appears from 1 Chron. xvi. 8. that David was the author of the first part at least of this psalm, after his obtaining several signal victories over the Philistines: and he himself, most probably, enlarged it afterwards with the glorious detail of the mercies of God to the ancestors of the Jews from the days of Abraham. There are some few variations, but of little consequence, in this psalm and that part of it which is found 1 Chron. xvi. ; but what follows from thence to the end is different in both. As it is historical, there need but few words to explain it.

Ver.

12 When there were *but* a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.

13 When they went from one nation to another, from *one* kingdom to another people;

14 He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their fakes;

15 *Saying*, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

16 Moreover, he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread.

17 He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant:

18 Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:

19 Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him.

20 The king sent and loosed him; *even* the ruler of the people, and let him go free.

21 He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:

22 To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

23 Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourn'd in the land of Ham.

24 And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

25 He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.

26 He sent Moses his servant; *and* Aaron whom he had chosen.

27 They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.

29 He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.

30 Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.

31 He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, *and* lice in all their coats.

32 He gave them hail for rain, *and* flaming fire in their land.

33 He smote their vines also and their fig-trees; and brake the trees of their coats.

34 He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number;

35 And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.

36 He smote also all the first-born in their land, the chief of all their strength.

37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and *there was* not one feeble *person* among their tribes.

38 Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.

39 He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.

40 *The people* asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.

41 He opened the rock, and the waters

Ver. 12. When there were but a few men in number] It is literally *men of number*; so few as easily to be numbered; in opposition to what their posterity afterwards were, as *the sand of the sea without number*. See Horace, *Ars Poet.* ver. 206.

Populus numerabilis, utpote parvus, &c.

They might with ease be numbered, being a few, &c. JONSON.

The word *לְפָנַי* *kimeat*, rendered *very few*, in the next clause, signifies either small as to the number, or as to regard and esteem. Thus *Isai. xvi. 14. The remainder shall be לְפָנַי meat; i. e. contemptible and few.* I take this idea to be concluded in the word here, their being *insignificant and inconsiderable*; as the fewness of their number is mentioned just before. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were all *strangers* in the land of Canaan, and went about from one nation and kingdom to another, without being injured by those among whom they sojourn'd. Dr. Chandler.

Ver. 19. Until the time, &c.] *Until the time that his saying came to pass, the word of the Lord purged him.* Green renders it, *Until the time that his prediction had come to pass, and the word of the Lord had cleared him.* See *Gen. xli. 14.*

Ver. 22. To bind his princes, &c.] *To command his princes at his pleasure, and to judge his senators.* The Vulgate, LXX, and Arabic, read, *That he might instruct his princes like himself, and teach, &c.* See Wall on the place.

Ver. 28. And they rebelled not against his word] *Yet they were not obedient to his word.* So the LXX and Syriac read; and thus it is rendered in the Liturgy of the Church of England. But Houbigant, thinking the present reading genuine, renders it, *and his words were not changed; i. e. "what he had commanded to be done, was done."* Mudge too is for the present reading. "The LXX (says "he) read the passage without the negative, understanding it of the Egyptians." As it now stands, it must be understood of those things of nature to which the divine word was addressed; that they did not disobey it, though the Egyptians had: they readily executed it: and this is made probable by the clause before: *He sent darkness, and it darkened;* to express the quickness of the execution. He no sooner sent darkness, but it was in fact dark.

Ver. 41. They ran in the dry places like a river] Or, *They*

gushed out; they ran in the dry places *like a river*.

42 For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.

43 And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness:

44 And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people;

45 That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD.

They went along, a river, in dry places. Or, Rivers flowed down through dry places. Green.

Ver. 42. His holy promise, and Abraham] The word of his holiness with Abraham. See ver. 8, 9.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Before the Psalmist enters on his subject, he prefaces his discourse with an exhortation to all around him,

1. To exalt and magnify the great and glorious God, and this in a variety of ways. Give him thanks for all his mercies past and present, and all his promises so rich and gracious. Call upon his name in humble faith, assured of being heard and answered: make known his deeds, what great things he has done for your souls and bodies, to encourage the hope, and excite the praises of all the righteous: talk ye of all his wondrous works, let them be the delightful daily subject of your conversation. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, in tongue as well as heart rejoice, ye that seek the Lord, as the grand object of your desires, and the rock of your hopes. Yea, glory in his holy name, renouncing all glorying in yourselves, to make mention only of his inestimably precious righteousness and grace. Seek the Lord and his strength, who alone can enable you to stand against your spiritual foes, and overcome them: seek his face evermore, in ceaseless prayer in this world, that you may behold the light of his countenance for ever in a better.

2. Abundant reason there is why we should thus do, if we consider, (1.) His past mercies, works of providence and grace, wonderful and great, such as Israel experienced in Egypt and the desert, and as the people of God daily find in their journey through this world's wilderness; and the judgments of his mouth, his revealed word, according to which we [must finally be judged, and which will bring upon us the heaviest condemnation, if we forget or neglect the great salvation therein contained. (2.) Our interest in him, as the Lord our God, our Jehovah, all-sufficient to supply every want of his people, worthy their most enlarged praise; and to engage them thereunto, offering himself to be their portion and exceeding great reward. (3.) His universal government, his judgments are in all the earth; and as the God of all the earth, he is most worthy to be obeyed and adored by all, and for ever: or it may refer to the judgments of his vengeance on the wicked, in the flood, in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, or in the plagues of Egypt; the fame of which were spread abroad, and God's justice and holiness therein manifested; for which praise should be ascribed to him.

2dly, The grand subject of the Psalmist's thanksgiving is, the covenant established in Christ Jesus.

1. God revealed it to Abraham; and, as the type of the eternal inheritance designed for his faithful spiritual

children, assured him of the possession of the land of Canaan as the inheritance of his natural posterity.

2. He fulfilled the promise in opposition to all human appearances, notwithstanding the difficulties which seemed insurmountable. They were few, very few; strangers, not possessed of a foot of land; driven from place to place, sojourning sometimes in Egypt, sometimes in Philistia, on account of the famine; but, in all their wanderings, still they experienced the divine protection; restrained by divine power, none dared to lift their hand to hurt them; and even kings are reproved, and warned how dangerous it would be to touch God's anointed ones, or harm his prophets. Note; (1.) The faithful people of God are indeed strangers and pilgrims upon earth, but God hath prepared for them a city: when their wanderings here below are ended, there remaineth for them an eternal rest. (2.) God's prophets are his peculiar care; he who toucheth them toucheth the apple of his eye, so jealous is he to vindicate their wrongs.

3. In the extraordinary case of Joseph, God, in a most astonishing providential case of Joseph, God, in a most astonishing providential manner, opened a way for the accomplishment of his designs of mercy towards them. He sent a famine on the land of Canaan, and brake the whole staff of bread, so that instant death and utter destruction seemed to threaten them; but he had made provision for their sustenance by means of Joseph, whom, though his envious brethren had wickedly sold for a slave, God had designed to send as their deliverer, after having experienced the deepest distresses, under the most cruel and unjust accusations of an enraged mistress; doomed to the lowest dungeon, bound in fetters of iron, and loaded with the most ignominious reproaches; but all wrought together for his good: when his faith and patience had been tried, God's word came unto him; and, divinely taught to interpret the dreams of his fellow-prisoners, the fame of it reached the court of Pharaoh, who sought the inspired prisoner. Convinced, by his interpretation of his dreams, that God's Spirit dwelt within him, the king loosed his bands, and vindicated his injured innocence from the accusations laid against him; advanced him to the highest post in his kingdom; delegated to him the exercise of his royal power to enact laws which all, even the greatest, must obey; and, wiser than the aged senators, appointed him their teacher, whence probably flowed the superior wisdom of the Egyptians. By him, his aged father and all his family were brought to Egypt, and in the land of Goshen richly provided for during the days of famine; where they increased exceedingly, and God's promises began to take effect. Note; (1.) Mysterious are the ways of Providence. When all things seem most against us, they are often really working for our good. (2.) Joseph, in his humiliation and exaltation is the type of Jesus, whose sufferings

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The Psalmist exhorteth to praise God: he prayeth for pardon of sin: the history of the people's rebellion, and God's mercy: he concludeth with prayer and praise.

PRAISE ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? *who* can shew forth all his praise?

3 Blessed *are* they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.

4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that thou bearest* unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;

5 That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.

6 We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.

7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red sea.

8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.

9 He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.

10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

11 And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.

12 Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.

13 They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel:

14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

15 And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

16 They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD.

17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.

18 And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.

19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

21 They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;

sufferings far exceeded, and whose glory infinitely excelleth. (3.) In every advancement we must remember whose hand hath raised us, and that we only then adorn our station, when we seek to make it subservient to the advancement of his kingdom and glory. (4.) Whatever calumnies and sufferings the saints of God endure, when their faith is tried, they shall be discharged with honour. (5.) God's church will never want a friend; he can raise them protectors where they least expect to find favour. (6.) We are sojourners on earth, as Jacob in that strange land: this is not our home nor our rest; nay, though never so much increased in worldly goods, we would not sit here below, but look for our promised Canaan, and long for our heavenly inheritance.

P S A L. CVI.

הללויה kalleluiab.

THE first, and the two last verses of this psalm, are given us as David's in 1 Chron. xvi. It is therefore most probable, that the whole of it was composed by him; particularly as the subject is very similar to that of the preceding psalm: only that here, besides commemorating God's mercies towards their forefathers, he reproves the Israelites for the ungrateful return they made. Mudge, however, thinks that the psalm was composed during the

captivity: an opinion which is much countenanced by the fourth and fifth verses.

Ver. 3. *Blessed are they that keep judgment*] This seems to be spoken upon a view of what they had suffered from their sins. "Happy they, who, by a constant tenor of "obedience, never provoke God to punish!" Mudge.

Ver. 4. *Remember me, &c.*] *Remember me, O Lord, when thou shewest favour to thy people.* Mudge.

Ver. 5. *That I may glory*] *That I may sing praises.*

Ver. 7. *Our fathers understood not*] *Regarded not.* LXX, Mudge, &c. Green renders the last clause, *But rebelled against the Most High at the Red Sea.* See Pl. lxxviii. 17.

Ver. 13. *They waited not for his counsel*] *They did not wait his providence.* Mudge. The LXX render it, *They did not obey his counsel.*

Ver. 15. *But sent leanness into their soul*] *But thinned their numbers by death.* It is literally, *Sent thinness into their life; or, in amidst their life.* Several of the ancient versions, with which Houbigant agrees, read, *Sent satiety or loathing into their souls.* See Pl. lxxviii. 30.

Ver. 20. *They changed their glory*] That is, their God, who was their glory; as Jer. ii. 11. Compare Rom. i. 23. This passage fully shews that the golden calf was intended as a symbolic representation of Jehovah. See Exod. xxxii. 4.

Ver.

22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.

23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them*.

24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word :

25 But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

26 Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness.

27 To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

29 Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions : and the plague brake in upon them.

30 Then stood up Phineas, and executed judgment : and so the plague was stayed.

31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.

32 They angered *him* also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes :

33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

34 They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them :

35 But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

36 And they served their idols : which were a snare unto them.

37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.

38 And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan : and the land was polluted with blood.

39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

40 Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen ; and they that hated them ruled over them.

42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

43 Many times did he deliver them ; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry :

45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

Ver. 26. Therefore he lifted up his hand] Lifting the hand was the usual form of swearing. As the history observes, that upon their refusing to take possession of the Promised Land, God swore that themselves should perish in the wilderness, but their children should be quietly settled in the possession of it, one is tempted to translate the passage thus : " God swore that he would give them their portion in the wilderness, and that he would give their children their inheritance among the nations of Canaan ; but themselves he would scatter up and down the countries they wandered through." Mudge.

Ver. 30. Then stood up Phineas, and executed judgment] The expression, *stood up*, signifies arising to execute judgment. See Numb. xxv. 7. The best commentary on this psalm is a reference to the history.

Ver. 33. So that he spake unadvisedly] The word *unadvisedly* is added in the Translation. The original says only that *he spake with his lips*: the speaking with the lips, being a thing in itself indifferent and innocent, can only be concluded ill from the influence which the preceding words seem to have upon it. *They provoked his spirit, so that he spake*

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with his lips ; i. e. " He spake passionately as one provoked." His passionate words, Numb. xx. 10. express such distrust and impatience as did not become so great a minister of God.

Ver. 37. They sacrificed their sons, &c.] It is very certain, that the sacrifices of these gods were indeed as cruel as they are here represented. Philastrius observes expressly, says Mr. Selden, that the Jews sacrificed their sons and daughters to devils, in the valley of Hinnom ; and Porphyry's testimony is a very good one, on this point, especially as he produces it from Sanchoniathon, one of their own historians. " The Phœnicians, in the time of great calamities, such as war, pestilence, or famine, sacrificed some one of their best-beloved friends to Saturn ; choosing him by lot ; and the Phœnician history, which Sanchoniathon wrote in the Phœnician language, and which Philobiblius translated into Greek, is full of such accounts." See Porph. de Abst. lib. ii. Selden de Diis Syr. syntag. i. c. 6. and Jer. xix. 4, 5.

Ver. 44. Nevertheless, &c.] *And he beheld when distress was upon them, and he heard their cry.*

H h

Ver.

46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to triumph in thy praise.

48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

P S A L. CVII.

The Psalmist exhorteth the redeemed, in praising God, to observe his manifold providence over travellers, over captives, over sick men, over seamen, and in divers varieties of life.

O GIVE thanks unto the LORD, for *he* is good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

Ver. 46. To be pitied] Namely, so as that they did not endeavour their total extirpation. See Judg. xiii. 1. But if this psalm was afterwards enlarged so as to be applied to the time of the Babylonish captivity, as some commentators suppose, then this verse in particular might probably relate to what is mentioned in Ezra, ix. 9. and Jer. xlii. 12.

Ver. 47. And gather us] The opinion of those who imagined this psalm to have been made in the time of the captivity of Babylon, Bishop Patrick thinks to have been very weak; for, says he, this verse upon which they ground that conjecture, may have another construction, and mean no more than this; that God would be pleased, when the nation or any part of it should be carried into captivity, to take pity on them, and to restore them again to their country; or rather, says he, in my opinion, it refers to those who in the days of Saul, or before, were taken prisoners by the Philistines or other nations; whom David prays God to gather to their own land again, that they might worship him in that place which he had prepared for the ark of his presence.

REFLECTIONS.—This psalm begins, as the foregoing concluded, with *Hallelujah*; for praise is always comely; and amidst every complaint we have to make, *it becometh well the just to be thankful.*

1. The Psalmist calls on us to bless God, *for he is good*, essentially so in himself, and manifesting it to us in acts of kindness surpassing great: *for his mercy endureth for ever*, to everlasting his faithful people will experience his regard; and therefore are bound to render him the tribute of praise: though *who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord*, recount the innumerable instances of his kindness and wondrous interpositions? *who can shew forth all his praise?* alas! our utmost efforts come infinitely short, and the best of our songs are scarcely the lisping of infancy.

2. He pronounces a blessing on God's believing people. *Blessed are they that keep judgment*, make God's word their

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he delivered them out of their distresses.

7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

8 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

rule, and desire to walk according thereunto; *and be that doeth righteousness at all times*; with steady integrity and simplicity seeking before God and man to approve himself in all his ways, and at all seasons.

3. He prays for himself, that by divine grace he may be enabled to approve his fidelity to God, and partake of the blessedness of his people. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people. O visit me with thy salvation!* for this cometh from God alone, and is to be received as the gift of his boundless favour and free grace; and possessed of this, he may hope to share in the felicity of God's faithful people, to partake in their eternal inheritance, and join their everlasting songs around the throne of glory. May this be my prayer and my portion for ever!

P S A L. CVII.

THIS psalm, according to some, was composed by David; and if so, it seems chiefly to relate to the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt. But, according to others, it was made by some devout person presently after their return from the Babylonish captivity. Hence the Psalmist takes occasion to magnify God's merciful providence over other men, of any other nation as well as that of the Jews, when they addressed themselves to him in their several calamities. It was a song in parts, one verse occurring four times, to be sung by the chorus. See more on the 8th verse. The fifth book of the Psalms, according to the Hebrew division, begins here. There are those who understand this psalm as referring to the faithful believers, gathered out of all lands, and brought to that *continuing city*, (Heb. xiii. 14.) which they were still seeking amid the various dangers and difficulties whereto mortals are exposed; which dangers and difficulties are here in several instances represented, and urged as reasons for praising him now, from a sense of that goodness which guides and conducts the faithful through them all to that city where they may dwell and abide for ever. See ver. 4. Some

9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, *being* bound in affliction and iron;

11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High:

12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and *there was* none to help.

13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saved them out of their distresses.

14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

15 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

16 For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

17 Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.

18 Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.

Some of the descriptions in this psalm are remarkably elegant and sublime.

Ver. 2, 3. Let the redeemed, &c.] Though these verses seem more immediately to refer to the return of the Jews from Babylon; yet the next has a more immediate reference to the deliverance out of Egypt: but it is most probable that the latter expressions are only metaphorical; for it is very common with the Hebrew poets to take their ideas from the past transactions related in their history. See Bishop Lowth's eighth Lecture.

Ver. 4. No city to dwell in] No city of habitation; or abiding city.

Ver. 8. Oh that men would praise the Lord, &c.] Let them acknowledge to the Lord his mercy, and his wonderful works, &c. Mudge, and so in the following intercalary verses. Dr. Hammond remarks very properly, that this is a psalm of answering, or parts, to be sung alternately; having a double burden or intercalary verse oft recurring. See ver. 6, 13, &c. This is apparent upon the most transient view of it. We may suppose one side of the choir to have begun with the first of the parts, and then the other side to have taken the second, and so on. The 9th verse evidently belongs to the first part; for the 10th begins quite another subject. This the Targum confirms, supposing the psalm to have been written before the captivity, but to have been a prophecy of it; and it paraphrases the 9th verse as spoken of the children of Israel at large; but the 10th as spoken of Zedekiah, thus; "Of Zedekiah and the princes of Israel, he prophesied and said, Zedekiah and the princes of Israel, who dwelt in darkness and the shadow of death," &c. It is observable, that after each of the intercalary verses one is added, expressive of deliverance or praise. I would further observe, that if the psalm be supposed to be made with a view to the alternate response of one side of the choir to the other, then it may be considered as if it was written exactly after the method of the ancient pastorals; where, be the subject of their verse what it will, each swain endeavours to excel the other; and one may perceive their thoughts and expressions gradually to rise upon each other; and I think we may from hence discover a manifest beauty in the composition of this divine pastoral. We will suppose then, that the author composed it for the use of his brethren the Jews, when in the joy of their hearts they were assembled

after their return from their captivity. At such a time, what theme could be so proper for the subject of his poem, as the manifest goodness of Almighty God? The first performers therefore invite the whole nation to praise God for this; a great instance of it, being their late deliverance and return from captivity. At ver. 10. the other side take the subject, and rightly observe, that the return of their great men, who were actually in chains, was a more remarkable instance of God's mercy to them, than the return of the people in general, who were only dispersed, as we may suppose, up and down the open country. Then the first performers beautifully compare this unexpected deliverance to that which God sometimes vouchsafes to the languishing dying man, when he recalls, as it were, the sentence of death, and restores him to his former vigour: The others again compare it, with still greater strength and expression, to God's delivering the affrighted mariner from all the dreadful horrors of the ungovernable and arbitrary ocean. But the first, still resolved to outdo the rest, recur to that series of wonderful works which God had vouchsafed to their nation, ver. 32. and of which they had so lately had a convincing proof. Wherefore at last, as in a common chorus, they all conclude with exhorting each other to a serious consideration of these things, and to make a proper return to Almighty God for them. No doubt the composition of this psalm is admirable throughout; and the descriptive part of it adds, at least, its share of beauty to the whole: but what is most to be admired is the conciseness, and withal the expressiveness of the diction, which strikes our imagination with inimitable elegance. The weary and bewildered traveller, the miserable captive in the hideous dungeon, the sick and dying man, the seaman foundering in a storm—are described in so affecting a manner, that they far exceed any thing of the kind, though never so much laboured. See Lowth's 29th Prelection.

Ver. 11. Because they rebelled] Mudge reads this and the next verse in a parenthesis: (*Because they had rebelled, &c. ver. 12. And so he hath brought down their heart with pain; they are fallen without a helper.*) *Ver. 13. 'Tis when they cry unto the Lord, &c.*

Ver. 17. Fools because of their transgression] *The foolish, who depart from his way, and are brought low by their iniquities.—Ver. 18. Whose soul loatheth all manner of food, and*

19 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saveth them out of their distresses.

20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions.

21 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

24 These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.

25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

30 Then are they glad because they be

quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

31 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground;

34 A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

35 He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs.

36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;

37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.

38 He blesteth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

39 Again, they are diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.

40 He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, *where there is no way.*

who draw near to the gates of death.—Ver. 19. *When these cry unto the Lord, &c.* Green. The reader will observe throughout the whole translation of this psalm, a very irregular interchange of tenses; which it may be sufficient to have noted once, and to add, that in general the verbs should be translated in the present tense.

Ver. 26. &c. *They mount up, &c.*] There cannot be conceived any thing more poetical or sublime, than this description of a storm at sea; a subject on which the most celebrated poets have employed their pens. It would be a pleasing task, if the nature or limits of our work allowed it, to compare this description of the Psalmist's with those of ancient and modern writers. But we are denied this agreeable task; and shall only add, that those who will make the comparison will find how much superior are the ideas and expressions of the sacred poet, to those of uninspired writers. Instead of, *are at their wit's end*, some translators read, *and all their skill* [namely, in failing] *faileth them.*

Ver. 29. *He maketh the storm a calm*] *He maketh the storm to stand in silence.* Mudge.

Ver. 32. *The people—and—elders*] The *people* are here opposed to the *elders*, and both together signify the whole

assembly or congregation; for, among the Jews, the doctors, the rulers of the synagogue, and the elders, had a distinct apartment from the people; and, the service being much in antiphone or response, part was spoken by those who officiated in the seat of the elders, and part by the multitude of the people at large, who answered *amen*, at least, at their giving thanks.

Ver. 39. *Again, they are diminished and brought low*] *Whereas the others are diminished and brought low, by drought, suffering, and sorrow.* The *others* mean those referred to in the 33d and 34th verses.

Ver. 40. *He poureth contempt upon princes*] This and the two following verses contain an opposition which seems to point to Pharaoh and the children of Israel. Pharaoh was *brought to shame, and made to wander in תהו ובהו*, an idea compounded of *waste, confusion, and darkness*; for such was his case when God turned the dark side of the cloud upon him in the pursuit, and the Israelites came off triumphantly, marching in flocks like sheep.

Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that from the 33d verse David refers to the change wrought in the barren desert of Hareth, by the blessing of God upon his own and his companion's industry. It is a plain description, says he, of his own

41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh *him* families like a flock.

42 The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice :

own case, and such as can suit no other; and it is all spoken in the style of an experienced man: and indeed, if this were not so evident from the nature of the thing, his manner of introducing this reflection sufficiently shews that it related to himself. He observes, that *God maketh a fruitful land barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* Again, says he, *He maketh the wilderness a standing water, &c.* The nature of the antithesis plainly shews, that as God, for the sins of men, makes a fruitful land barren, so for their piety and righteousness, he turns barrenness into culture. But, the case being notoriously his own, he carefully forbore the least hint of piety or righteousness, lest he should be thought to vaunt of his own merits. And as to his ascribing all this to the agency of God, no man who considers the piety of his style will, for that reason, think it necessary to preclude the interposition of second causes, or human agency. Idleness, with regard to honest industry, is ordinarily the effect of vicious habits; and therefore it is no wonder if Canaan was, from the days of its ancient inhabitants, in the condition of the sluggard's vineyard, overrun with thorns and thistles; especially considering the desolations consequent to the ensuing and almost incessant wars. The Canaanites who inhabited the land before the days of Joshua were, without doubt, the wickedest and most abandoned race of mortals upon the face of the earth! And I believe it will be allowed, that all mankind are idle and negligent of culture, in proportion to their wickedness. Industry, and the honest arts of life, have a natural force to abate and restrain the unruly appetites and evil tendencies of the mind; whereas idleness lets them all loose, and indulges their excesses. Now idleness, in this view, and indeed in every view, is great guilt; and we know that briars and thorns are, in a great measure, the fruits of God's original curse upon guilt: and therefore God may, with great propriety, be said to *make a fruitful land barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* On the other hand, industry (I mean in things honest) is virtuous: And therefore when by this industry, exerted in hope, and in an humble dependance upon God for a blessing upon it, a barren land is made fruitful, God, without whose influence no industry can avail, may, in the style of a man truly religious, very probably be said to do all this, because the means are of his appointment, and the end the effect of his influence. This reasoning best accounts both for this psalm, and for that vast number of wilds and forests which protected David in the days of Saul; and at the same time makes it credible, that a man of so active, so improving, and so generous a spirit as David was, who chose, as all wise men would, to live independent, and would not suffer his men to injure his neighbours, or allow them in wickedness, (Ps. ci. 4.) took this occasion to employ them in culture, and subsist them by it, and took pleasure in the employment.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, This psalm opens like the foregoing with a thanksgiving to God, and suggests the same arguments for it, drawn from the goodness and mercy of God. We have here,

1. The state of the persons spoken of; they lie under the power of their enemies; dispersed, and outcast; wandering without a settled abode; suffering the deepest want; hungry and thirsty, and their soul fainting for want of nourishment: to such sore distresses the dearest children of God are sometimes reduced; and this is an emblem also of the state of the righteous themselves, before the redemption of Jesus is embraced by them; they are enslaved by their sins, outcasts from God's favour, and can find no true rest for their souls in this disordered world; convinced of their misery and guilt, their soul is parched and ready to perish, nor can any thing quench their intolerable thirst, but the blood and merits of Jesus Christ.

2. What methods they took. *They cried unto the Lord in their trouble*, who alone is able to deliver, and to whom the miserable and guilty sinner may fly, and find mercy and grace to help in time of need; for none ever sought his face in vain.

3. What relief they found. *He delivered them out of their distresses*; recovered them from their wanderings, and restored them to a peaceable abode. Thus shall the poor bewildered sinner who cries to God be led by the hand of his grace to Jesus his Saviour; find him the way, the truth, and the life; and, if persevering in the ways of holiness, be by him conducted to an eternal mansion of undisturbed repose in glory.

4. What thanks they are bound to render. *O that men, converted souls, who experience such mercy from God, would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for the wonderful works shewn to themselves, and to the children of men in the like state of distress.*

2dly, God despiseth not the sighing of the prisoners.

1. Their misery is described; shut up in dark and dismal dungeons, loaded with heavy irons, their souls afflicted, and the shadow of death extended over them. Such is man by nature, sunk in ignorance, dwelling in the shadow of spiritual death, bound in the fetters of corruption, and sitting down impotent to break the bands, or escape from the house of his prison.

2. The cause of this suffering is their sin, wilful rebellion against evident commands, and neglect of the fairest warnings. God leaves not himself any where without witnesses; but peculiarly inexcusable are those who sin against the light of his revealed will, and reject a preached gospel.

3. By his afflictive providence God made their proud spirit bend; conscious of the desperateness of their state, they fell at his feet; unless he save, they perish. Thus, by affliction and deep conviction of sin, does God break the proud spirit of fallen man, yielding to conviction; and then, as a lost and self-despairing sinner, he leads the penitent to the feet of Jesus, out of whom there is no salvation.

4. In their distress *they cried unto the Lord*, as their only refuge and help, and he delivered them from their distress; he broke their bands, opened their prison-doors, and brought them to behold the light of the day, and from the shadow of death restored them to life and liberty. From chains of iron thus to be released, how great the blessing?

but

and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

43 Whofo is wife, and will observe these

things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the LORD.

but how much more invaluable the redemption of our souls, when Jesus, at our prayer, plucked us from the belly of hell, loosed the bonds of corruption, rescued us from death eternal, and brought us forth to the glorious life and liberty of the sons of God. For this transcendent grace, bless the Lord, O my soul!

5. Every rescued captive is bound to ascribe glory to his great deliverer, and to praise his name; and the redeemed and saved sinner will not fail to render this tribute of his gratitude, and with delight to proclaim what God hath done for his soul to the children of men, that they may come and partake of the same goodness.

3dly, In sickness also God's mercy is proved, in answer to the prayer of the afflicted. We have,

1. Their dangerous situation. Through the power of disease their appetite fails, medicine is vain, and death hovers on their eyelids, ready to close them for ever in the dust.

2. The cause of their sickness is sin; that opened the door to Death, with all his train of evils, and we have only our own folly and wickedness to blame for all the bitter pangs that we feel. *Note;* (1.) Every suffering of our bodies should remind us of, and humble us for the sin of our souls. (2.) However wise sinners may conceit themselves, in casting off the restraints of God's law, and indulging their passions, they will be found at the last the most wretched fools.

3. God at their cry rescues them from the jaws of death, raises them from the bed of languishing, rebukes the disease, and, by his word, restores their lost health and strength again. *Note;* (1.) Is any sick? let him pray. Prayer can do more than medicine. (2.) Sin is the sickness of the soul; but when Jesus by his word and Spirit speaks to the heart, he heals our spiritual maladies, breaks the power of corruption, restores our souls to the life of grace below, and has provided for the faithful soul the eternal life of glory above. Great Physician, let me daily feel thy healing power!

4. Gratitude is the bounden duty of those whose life through mercy is restored. Let them acknowledge the goodness of God which they have tasted, and shew forth his praises, not only with thankful lips, but by devoting to his glory the days he hath prolonged; rejoicing in his salvation, and publishing to his praise the wonders of his grace.

4thly, The mariners who plough the main, dwelling in the midst of dangers, and daily beholding God's wonders in the deep, have peculiar obligations lying upon them to bless and praise him for the preservations they experience.

1. Their dangers are great and imminent. At God's command the stormy winds rush from their hollow caverns, and with tremendous roar raise up the foaming billows. Mounting the dreadful steep, the vessel seems to climb the skies: then, rushing down the horrid precipice, appears sunk within a watery grave. The affrighted seamen, unable to keep their feet, stagger on the deck; and, no longer able to guide the ship, give her up to the winds

and waves, ready to abandon themselves to despair. How prepared to die ought they to be, who are in deaths so often!

2. They cry unto God. How can they do otherwise, when death in this most tremendous form stands ghastly in their view! Then instant help appears: he who "rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm," checks with a word its fury: the winds are hushed, the waves subside, and, like a molten looking-glass, not a dimple ruffles the surface of the late troubled ocean. *Note;* (1.) A seaman, above all others, should be a man of faith and prayer. (2.) He who bids the stormy waves be still, and they obey him, can as easily speak peace to the tempestuous soul, and calm the distresses of the despairing sinner.

3. With delight and joy the mariner beholds the danger past, and now, the wished-for haven in view, expects rest from all his toils. Thus, after tossing long on life's tempestuous ocean, the faithful soul, at death's approach, descries the happy shore, and enters the fair haven of eternal rest, where it would be.

4. For such wondrous deliverance and distinguished goodness, how can we but adore the hand that saves us, and, in the great congregation, offer up our thanksgivings, the expression of our lively gratitude, and the encouragement for others in the like distress to call upon the God who heareth prayer.

5thly, Various and surprising are the changes which God worketh in the earth.

1. He makes the fruitful land barren for the iniquity of its inhabitants, turning the rivers into a wilderness. Again, when his blessings rest on some favoured people, the wilderness changes its face, and blossoms as the rose. Plenty there satisfies the hungry, and the rising city affords a safe abode to the inhabitants. The vineyards spring, the corn flourishes, and the vintage and harvest crown the happy year. Their families multiply under the divine blessing, and their flocks and herds greatly increase. On the other hand, when he turns the current of his favour back again, they wither and decay; oppressed, afflicted, and groaning under their sorrows, their numbers and strength decrease, till they become as a beacon on a hill. Thus, when princes abuse their divinely delegated power, he, by whom kings reign, pours contempt upon them, and hurls them from the throne; and, fallen from their high estate, compels them to wander destitute and bewildered in the trackless wilderness; while by his providence he sometimes raises the poor from the dunghill, sets them on high, crowns them with dignity, blesses them with a numerous family, and puts all affliction far away from them. In all which dispensations we may admire and adore the justice and power of God. *Note;* (1.) Sinners are the plague of the earth; for their sakes the land mourneth, while the righteous procure perpetual blessings on their abode. (2.) If we be providentially exalted or brought low, increased or diminished, let us see and acknowledge through the whole the hand of God.

2. The effects which these changes will produce. *The righteous shall see it, and rejoice; happy to behold the humble exalted,*

P S A L. CVIII.

David encourageth himself to praise God: he prayeth for God's assistance, according to his promise: his confidence in God's help.

A Song or Psalm of David.

O GOD, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.

2 Awake, psaltery and harp: I *myself* will awake early.

3 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

4 For thy mercy *is* great above the heavens: and thy truth *reacheth* unto the clouds.

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth.

6 That thy beloved may be delivered: save *with* thy right hand, and answer me.

7 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

8 Gilead *is* mine; Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head; Judah *is* my lawgiver;

9 Moab *is* my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.

10 Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

11 *Wilt* not thou, O God, *who* hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?

12 Give us help from trouble: for vain *is* the help of man.

13 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

exalted, the crest of pride fallen, and God glorified in his providential dispensations: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth; the sinner, confounded, shall be forced to lay his mouth in the dust, and own the righteous judgment. *Who is wise*, or, with an interrogation, *Who is wise?* let them show it by an attentive and persevering regard to these ways of providence, and observe these things, to profit thereby; and then they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord, see it in all his dispensations, and experience it to the present and eternal welfare of their faithful souls.

P S A L. CVIII.

Title. שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד *shir mizmor ledavid.*] The former part of this psalm is very little different from the last five verses of the 57th psalm, which David is supposed to have placed here, instead of those wherewith the 60th psalm begins, because he had now made some progress in those wars which he was but entering upon when he wrote the 60th psalm; and therefore here he begins to thank God for his mercy, as there he laments the ill condition of his affairs. We refer to the notes on the 57th and 60th psalms. Dr. Delaney observes, that the introduction to this psalm plainly shews David's situation to have been now very different from what it was when he wrote the 60th psalm: How finely, says he, is the noblest spirit of piety and of poetry united in this hymn! How delicate this address to his lyre! to be ready at his call, to be early awake, and prepared for it; for he was resolved to be stirring betimes! The greatness of the occasion required it; which was no less than to sing the praises of the Almighty, and to celebrate his glory to the whole world around. Filled with this glorious design, which had taken entire possession of his heart, he immediately declares that he will execute it, ver. 3. *I will confess*, &c.; and, forgetting his address to his lyre, instantly

breaks out into raptures upon the truth and mercy of his God: *Great above the heavens is thy mercy, and to the ether thy truth*; alluding, doubtless, to the purity and transparency of that heavenly substance, to render it the aptest and finest emblem of truth. Life of David, b. iii. c. 3.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Psalmist discovers in these verses the blessed frame of his own spirit, and teaches us how our praises should be offered up to God: with *hearts fixed* on the sacred subject; *rising early* to the pleasing task; and *openly*, with every warm expression of grateful affection, proclaiming in the midst of the people his mercy and faithfulness, his greatness and glory: mercy more extensive than the heavens, truth which reacheth to the clouds, and glory infinitely beyond all blessing and praise which men or angels can offer.

2dly, We have,

1. The Psalmist's prayer in behalf of himself and people. *Note*; Every believer is a David, a beloved, and may confidently expect to see the salvation of God.

2. He already triumphs, since he has the truth of God engaged to bring him to Israel's throne, and put the neighbouring nations, their enemies, under his footstool. *Note*; (1.) What God promises, faith can rejoice in, as already done. (2.) The beloved Son of David hath an everlasting kingdom, and before him all his enemies must lick the dust.

3. Whatever difficulties were in the way, by human power insurmountable, whatever discouragements he had met with, and however numerous the hosts of his enemies, he looks to God; if he be Israel's leader, not Edom's walls can withstand; but, strong in his might, his people shall be more than conquerors. Thus may the believer, in the view of the spiritual foes of his soul, and the strong fortresses of corruption, be ready to stagger in the consciousness

P S A L. CIX.

David complaining of his slanderous enemies, under the person of Judas, devoteth them: he sheweth their sin: complaining of his own misery, he prayeth for help: he promiseth thankfulness.

To the chief musician, A Psalm of David.

HOLD not thy peace, O God of my praise.

2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.

3 They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.

4 For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.

5 And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.

6 Set thou a wicked man over him: and

let Satan stand at his right hand.

7 When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.

8 Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

9 Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

10 Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek *their bread* also out of their desolate places.

11 Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the stranger spoil his labour.

12 Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.

13 Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.

14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin

sciousness of his own weakness; but there is help laid on one mighty to save: through Christ strengthening us, we can do all things; and it is he who shall here below tread down all our enemies, and bring all his faithful people at last to share his triumphs over sin, death, and hell, in the eternal world of glory.

P S A L. CIX.

Title. למנצח לדוד מזמור lamnatsch ledavid mizmor.] There is no doubt that this psalm was composed by David; but whether when he was persecuted by Saul and calumniated by Doeg (see 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.), or whether at the time of Abfalom's rebellion, is uncertain. Several of the Jewish interpreters think the former; though the Syriac translators understood it of the latter; if so, it refers to the traitor Ahithophel, who, in a fit of despair, went and hanged himself, 2 Sam. xvii. 23. In this last circumstance, he answers most exactly. But certain it is, that either Doeg or Ahithophel was a fit type and representative of the traitor Judas; who, without all question, was prophetically intended in this psalm, for so St. Peter expounds it, Acts, i. 30. If therefore we consider it in its first sense as relating to one of them, yet in its principal and prophetic sense it refers to Judas and the persecutors of our Lord; against whom the Psalmist denounces the most dreadful judgments. And in this sense the curses, as they are called, can give no offence to any well-disposed mind; for in reality they are mere prophetic denunciations, and in that view should be translated throughout in the future, as we have had occasion to observe more than once before. To this effect Theodoret observes well, that, though our Saviour commands us to bless our persecutors, no one should think this prophecy repugnant to that command: for the Psalmist does not speak here by way of imprecation, but foretels the future punishment which

should attend Judas and the unmerciful Jews who betrayed and persecuted Christ.

Ver. 1. Hold not thy peace.] The idea of God's holding his peace or keeping silence is opposed to his affording his gracious aid and protection to his servants. *Of my praise,* means, "who art the subject of my praise, or, who hath hitherto given me continual cause to praise thee." It may be read, *O God, my praise.*

Ver. 4. For my love, &c.] While I pray for them, they in return for my love falsely accuse me. Green.

Ver. 6. Set thou a wicked man over him.] Set a wicked one over him, and let an adversary stand at his right hand. I choose to translate it, says Mudge, by the general word *adversary*, because it better suits the idea of a judgment or trial. Instead of an *advocate's* standing at his right hand, as he in the last verse of the psalm intimates God would do for him, he wishes an *adversary* to stand there, to push the affair against him to the utmost, with a wicked unmerciful man to judge him. Mr. Green, following Dr. Sykes, understands it in a different way, as if these were the words and wishes of David's enemies against him, not of David against his enemies. "Set a wicked man over him, say they, to hear his cause, and let a false accuser, &c." And indeed there seems great probability in this interpretation; as David in the 21st verse, and so on to the end of the psalm, appeals to God from these imprecations of his enemies, and intreats him to bless, although they curse him. In this view it is remarkably striking, that the curses vainly uttered by David's enemies against him should reverberate upon their own heads, and be so singularly verified in the type. See Sykes's Introduction to his Paraphrase on the Hebrews, page 32.

Ver. 10. Let them seek their bread.] Let them be driven from their ruinous habitations. Green.

Ver. 11. Let the extortioner catch.] Or, Let the usurer extort.

Ver.

of his mother be blotted out.

15 Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.

17 As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.

18 As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment; so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

19 Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.

20 Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul.

21 But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.

22 For I am poor and needy, and my heart

is wounded within me.

23 I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.

24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.

25 I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads.

26 Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:

27 That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD, hast done it.

28 Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.

29 Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.

30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.

31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.

Ver. 16. That he might even slay the broken in heart] And broken in heart, to slay him.

Ver. 18. Like oil into his bones] These expressions admirably mark out an adhering rooted curse, which penetrated the body, as the water which one drinks, and as the oil with which one is rubbed: They have swallowed cursing like water; they are penetrated by it, as by the oil wherewith they have been anointed. Calmet. Houbigant thinks that the waters of jealousy are here meant. See Numb. v. 18. And Green renders it, with much seeming propriety, like marrow into his bones.

Ver. 20. Let this be the reward, &c.] This shall, or will be the reward, &c. Thus David, in prophecy, foresees that the curses vented by his enemies against himself, would reverberate upon their own heads. See the note on ver. 6. There are some, however, who would render the words: This is the behaviour of mine adversaries, with respect to, or before Jehovah. See Kennicot's Dissert. v. ii. p. 582.

Ver. 23. I am tossed up and down as the locust] I am driven away, or shaken off like the locust. Green and Mudge. Dr. Shaw, speaking of the large and numerous swarms of locusts in Barbary, says, "When the wind blew briskly, so that these swarms were crowded by others, or thrown one upon another, we had a lively idea of that comparison of the Psalmist's being tossed up and down as the locust." See Travels, p. 187.

Ver. 31. He shall stand at the right hand of the poor] That is, to defend, and plead for him. As the accuser stood at

the right hand, ver. 6. so shall God also stand there, as this poor and distressed man's advocate, to maintain him against the injurious charge brought against him. The word *condemnu* should rather be rendered *oppose*, or *pursue his soul*, or *life*, i. e. plead against him, so as to call his life in question. Though it was in war, not in judicature, that David's enemies thus contended with him, yet one of these is poetically expressed by the other; their hostile opposition, by words which are only forensic.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Psalmist, in the person of the Messiah, addresses his prayer to God, under the oppressions of the wicked.

1. He lodges his appeal with God, under the calumnies of his enemies. *Hold not thy peace*, as if disregarding his sufferings, *O God of my praise or my glorying*: for even the Lord Jesus, as man, regarded his father as the object of his worship and glory.

2. He describes the invenomed malice of his enemies, from whose violence he sought deliverance. *Wicked in temper and practice; deceitful*, with fairest professions covering the blackest designs; *liars*, whose tongues distilled poison into the incautious ear; filled with *hatred*, restlessly bent on mischief, they compassed him about; and violent, they with causeless rage fought against him; returned his love with ingratitude and enmity, and rendered evil for the good he shewed them. Thus was Jesus treated; reviled, traduced, betrayed by him who called him master,

P S A L. CX.

The kingdom, the priesthood, the conquest, and the passion of Christ.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine

enemies thy footstool.

2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the

but fought only to ensnare him: things laid to his charge that he knew not; persecuted, though innocent, with the most implacable vengeance; all his love repaid with hatred; and the astonishing miracles of kindness that he wrought exasperating the resentment of his enemies, and returned by an ignominious crucifixion.

3. Under these trials, prayer was his recourse. *I give myself unto prayer, or I am a man of prayer*; herein he exercised himself day and night, and even on the cross ceased not to cry, "Father, forgive them." May we learn of our divine Lord thus to pray for those who despitefully use and persecute us!

2dly, They who have blamed David's spirit, as if he appeared vindictive, have mistaken him greatly. When he speaks as a prophet, he foresees and foretels what would be the end of the wicked: when he speaks in the person of the Son of God, he denounces the just judgment due to the children of perdition. Terrible are the woes herein contained; Judas felt them: may we never, by like transgressions, provoke the same punishment.

3dly, We have the Incarnate Redeemer's complaint and prayer, and his joy in being heard and answered.

1. His condition is very distressing: *poor and needy, born in a stable, and having no place to lay his head; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; his heart wounded with bitterest indignities, and more deeply still with the wrath of God due to the sins that he bore: hurried to the grave by a violent death, as the declining shadow: tossed to and fro, from Pilate to Herod, from Annas to Caiaphas: weak with fasting, and his body emaciated: reproached as a Samaritan, a magician, a mover of sedition, and, even on the cross, insulted by those who shook their heads at him, mocking at his high pretensions of being the Son of God.* *Note;* If our Head thus suffered, let not his members murmur at their lot, under the pressures of poverty, a decaying body, or a reviling world: Jesus hath endured the cross before us.

2. His prayer is very importunate. Deliver, help, and save me: and to this end he pleads God's own glory concerned in vindicating his righteous cause; his mercy, ever ready to succour the poor destitute. Such interposition also would carry conviction of God's interesting himself on his behalf; others would acknowledge his hand, and these enemies themselves be confounded and ashamed: *ashamed as penitent; or confounded as criminals.* Thus, if God helped and blessed him, he could sit easy under the curses of his enemies, well knowing how impotent they were, and only big with vengeance on themselves. *Note;* (1.) If God bless us, we need not care how much men curse us. (2.) All our hope must be placed on God's boundless mercy and grace: he alone can help and save us, not we ourselves.

3. His joy is great in the Lord. Among the multitude he will lift up his voice; yea, aloud his praises shall be heard for this great salvation of God. *For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, his Messiah, and all his poor people, to support and protect them; to save him from those that condemn his soul; as he did when he raised up Jesus from the dead, and set him at his own right hand; and as he will do with all his persecuted, faithful, and suffering disciples at the last day, when none shall appear to lay one charge against them, and all their former adversaries shall be found liars.*

P S A L. CX.

Title. לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר *ledavid mizmor.*] It is universally agreed, that this psalm was composed by David: and it seems to be almost as universally agreed, that he speaks not of himself at all in it, but directly of the Messiah. This is the more remarkable, because in most, if not all the other psalms, where he prophesies of our Saviour, there is an obvious meaning, if not throughout the psalm, yet in several parts of it, which relate to some particular occasion, some passage or other in David's history; and those psalms are to be understood of Christ in a secondary sense, though not less evident, and sometimes more so than the first. But this psalm is wholly to be understood of Christ alone. Bishop Hare says, that because he had observed that most things in the psalms which were fulfilled in Christ, were spoken in their first, and, as it is called, literal sense of David, who was an illustrious type of Christ, he tried more than once whether he could not apply this psalm to David; but could not in any way which was satisfactory. De-Muis had laboured before him on the same subject, and with the same success. Indeed the ancient Jews themselves understood it thus; and that this was the known and received sense of it in our Saviour's time, appears from what passed between him and the Pharisees, Matth. xxii. 42, &c. To the same sense St. Peter applies it, Acts, ii. 34, 35. and the inspired writer to the Hebrews, ch. i. 13. and this is further clear from the 4th verse of it; for the priesthood was confined to the line of Aaron; and none of David's posterity, the Messiah only excepted, was ever entitled to that honour. Nor indeed could any of Aaron's descendants presume to style themselves *priests for ever*, as our High-priest most literally is. We may therefore say with Bishop Patrick, that this psalm is a very plain prediction of our Saviour's divinity, his royal dignity, his priesthood, his victories, and triumph.

Ver. 1. The Lord said, &c.] That is, "God the Father said to God the Son, whom I honour as my Lord, and adore as my God, Sit thou (namely, after thy sufferings upon earth) at my right hand;"—an expression denoting the highest dignity and honour; and alluding to earthly monarchs,

womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the

monarchs, who placed those on their right hand to whom they would shew the greatest honour, or whom they designed to advance to the greatest power and authority. See 1 Kings, ii. 19. It here signifies the dominion which Jesus Christ, after his death, received from God the Father, as the Messiah. Thus he says of himself, Rev. iii. 21. *I overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne.* It is added, *until I make, &c.* Jesus Christ subdues his enemies by the power which is essential to him, as he is one with the Father, God blessed for ever; and he does it also by the power which he has received from the Father, in quality of Mediator. See Matth. xxviii. 18. 1 Cor. xv. 25. *Thine enemies, mean, thy crucifiers;* converting some, and destroying others; the idolatrous *heathen;* subjecting them to thy gospel; the power of *sin* and *Satan* in men's hearts, and at last *death* itself. The expression, *thy footstool*, which denotes an entire subdual of enemies, alludes to the custom of Eastern nations, to tread upon the necks of the kings whom they had conquered, and to make them, as it were, their *footstool*. See Josh. x. 24. 2 Sam. xxii. 41. Mr. Martin, in his *Explication des Textes difficiles*, has shewn that this expression of sitting at the right hand of God, not only implies the elevation of the Messiah to the throne, but his equality with the Father; and he observes, that the Divinity of Jesus Christ could never have been opposed, if these words had been properly understood: he remarks further, that the word *footstool* declares the same thing. To have a footstool, says he, was formerly a mark of distinction, reserved only for those who were appointed to a dignity. There is no mention of footstool in Scripture, but where God and kings are concerned. The ark of the covenant is often called the Lord's footstool; 1 Chron. xxviii. 2, &c. and it is said, 2 Chron. ix. 18. that the footstool of Solomon's throne was of gold. In short, Homer gives footstools only to heroes and persons of the first rank. These remarks shew, that the mention of footstool in this place, is only to exalt the power of the Son of God, and to establish it upon the most solid and glorious foundations. It will sufficiently distinguish this footstool, that it shall be composed only of the heads of his enemies; of the impudent Jews, of the persecutors of the church, of Antichrist, of sinners, of death, of hell, and of the devil. These are his enemies: these are they whom he shall bruise; whom he shall rule with a rod of iron, and break in pieces as a vessel of clay; and who shall serve for his everlasting triumph; see Ps. ii. 9. which psalm the reader will observe bears a great affinity to the present.

Ver. 2, 3. The Lord shall send the rod] It is plain, that by making but two periods of the 2d, 3d, and 4th verses of the psalm, which is confessed on all hands to be prophetic of the Messiah's reign, the Jews have so far murdered the sense of it, that no version has been able to translate it without some needless and unwarrantable suppletives; whereas, had they divided it into three verses, and placed the full stops where they ought to be, the sense would have been clear, easy, and exactly agreeable to the prophecy contained in it. But perhaps this is what they

carefully avoided. The reason of it will appear by what follows. And as no version has as yet rectified it, we shall take the liberty to subjoin the literal translation of those three verses, according to their and our punctuation, that the reader may see which ought to be preferred.

According to the Messoretic.

Ver. 2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy power out of Zion: Be thou ruler in the midst of thine enemies.

3. Thy free-will people in the days of thy power, in the beauty of holiness; from the womb of the morning is the dew of thy birth.

According to our Punctuation.

Ver. 2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy power out of Zion.

3. Rule thou, in the midst of thine enemies, thy free-will people, in the day of thy power, in the beauty of holiness.

4. From the womb of the morning is the dew of thy birth.

In the first of these the reader will see that the placing the full point after *enemies* strikes off the next words, *thy free-will people*, from being either the accusative of the verb *רדה* *redeh, rule thou*, going before, or from having any connexion with what comes after. So that the words stand so ungrammatically there by themselves, that to make sense of the verse, most versions have been forced to make it the nominative of a verb, which they have substituted to it of their own. Thus one of our versions—that in the Liturgy of the church of England,—words it thus, “In the day of thy power shall the people offer free-will offerings;” where the words *shall offer* are added to make up the sense; and the other words are inverted by placing the words in the day of thy power before them, contrary to the Hebrew. That in our Bible is still wider from the original, though it substitutes less, as the reader may see by comparing it with ours here, which is exactly literal and plain. According, therefore, to this pointing, the verses in question may be fairly commented as follows; ver. 2. *The Lord shall send the rod, or sceptre of thy power out of Zion;* i. e. out of the tribe of Judah; ver. 3. *Rule thou over thy free-will people,*—for none but such are fit to be Christ's subjects. *In the midst of thine enemies,* Jews and heathens, or, in a spiritual sense, the world, the flesh, and the devil. *In the day of thy power,* that is, when all power shall be given him, both in heaven and earth, Matt. xxviii. 18. *In the beauties of holiness;* which is the peculiar characteristic of Christ's reign, and of his religion. Univ. Hist. vol. iii. p. 223.

Ver. 3. From the womb of the morning, &c.] Thou hast shone like the morning from thy very birth; thy youth has been covered with dew. Rom. xviii. sed vid. Hiller, part ii. p.

order of Melchizedek.

5 The LORD at thy right hand shall strike

through kings in the day of his wrath.

6 He shall judge among the heathen, he

26. Nold. p. 1029. Or, *The dew of thy youth is as from the womb of the morning.* Mr. Mann in his Critical Notes, after a variety of observations, gives us the second and third verses thus: *A sceptre of night will Jehovah deliver thee out of Sion; reign thou in the midst of thine enemies; ver. 3. and with thee, O prince, in the day of thy power, thy saints, through mercy clothed with splendour. Before the morning-star I begot thee, my Son.* Houbigant renders the latter clause somewhat similar: *Before the morning-star I have begotten thee from the womb.* According to the first exposition of the words, the meaning must be, that quickly after the morning or beginning of Christ's kingdom, it should overspread the earth as the morning dew. According to the second exposition, the multiplicity of Christ's seed, or the faithful, is foretold: "Thy seed will not be less numerous or fruitful than the morning dew." And according to that of Mann and Houbigant, with which many of the ancient versions agree, the eternal generation of the Son is declared. Bishop Reynolds explains it agreeably to the second exposition. "Thy children shall be born in as great abundance unto thee, as the dew which falleth from the womb of the morning;" and I cannot help adding, that this interpretation appears to me not only most agreeable to the context, but the most natural and easy interpretation of the Hebrew. "The dew of thy youth is [as the dew] from the womb of the morning." See Cant. v. 3. Isai. xxvi. 19. Job, xxxviii. 8, 28, 29. Bishop Lowth, speaking of the intermixture of metaphor with allegory in Gen. xlix. 9. observes, that the case is the same with regard to that memorable prophecy which foretold the surprising growth of the gospel; where, indeed, the metaphor being blended with the simile, and the principal word not being repeated, causes some obscurity: *The dew of thy progeny is more than the womb of the morning;* meaning, "The dew of thy progeny is more abundant than the dew which proceeds from the womb of the morning." See his 10th Lecture.

Ver. 4. Thou art a priest for ever] The Jews have, either through design or haste, corrupted this text in such a manner that all its force with respect to its application to Christ is lost; for the literal version of the words according to the present Hebrew is, *Thou art a priest for ever, according to my order, O Melchizedek, or O my just king.* As this corruption is entirely owing to the addition of *jod* to the word *אֵלֶּיךָ אֵלֶּיךָ* *alibruth*, which letter is likewise corruptly added to other words, the text may be restored to its genuine purity by omitting that letter; and that it should be omitted is evident from the LXX, Vulgate, Ethiopic, and Arabic, which concur in reading the same as our English version. See Houbigant, Kennicott's Dissert. vol. i. p. 218. and Heb. v. 6.

Ver. 5, 6. The Lord at thy right hand] This is to be understood of the Messiah, instated in his regal power at the right hand of his Father; and not of the Father himself as his helper and defender, as Pl. xvi. 8. and elsewhere the phrase is understood. The prophet here on a sudden addresses himself to God the Father; and such transitions,

as we have frequently observed, are common in the Hebrew poetry. The Lord will *strike through*, &c. that is break in pieces the greatest powers upon earth, who shall provoke his displeasure, by an obstinate opposal of his authority, and of the establishment of his gospel. It is added, *He shall judge among the heathen;* demonstrate himself to all the heathen world to be their law-giver and judge. *He shall fill the places with the dead bodies,* namely, of those powers, whom he shall strike through in the day of his wrath: *and he shall wound the heads, the principals or rulers, over or of many countries;* i. e. the Roman emperors themselves, who shall then rule over the greatest part of the world. Mudge renders the last clause, *He shall crush the head against the earth plentifully.* The reader will easily discern that the Psalmist here describes the exercise of Christ's regal and supreme dominion; his conquest over sin and sinners, and over all the opposition of the powers of darkness, in metaphorical expressions taken from earthly conquests. See Rev. xiii. 7, 8. xiv. 8, &c. We would just observe, that there are some expositors who understand the words, *the Lord at thy right hand*, to be an apostrophe to the church; expressing Christ's care and protection of it, his readiness to assist and defend his own people against all the injuries and assaults of adverse power: as if it had been said, "Be not dismayed nor cast down, O ye subjects of this king, as if, being exalted to God's right hand, he had given over the care and protection of his people. For as he is at the right hand of his Father in glory and majesty, so is he also at your right hand, standing to execute judgment on your enemies, the greatest, the highest, the wisest of them, and to reveal the power of his arm towards you in your protection." See Bishop Reynolds.

Ver. 6. He shall judge among the heathen, &c.] Capel in his *Critica Sacra*, p. 367. has out of St. Jerome's Latin translation helped us to a better reading of this place, says Mr. Mann; *He shall judge the nations; he shall fill the vallies; (corresponding perhaps with the sense of Isai. xl. 4. Every valley shall be exalted, &c.) and smite in sunder the heads over divers countries: "He shall crush the head of the great ones on the earth;"* which, in the opinion of Bruccioli, the author of an old Italian translation, may be pointed at Antichrist. Mr. Fenwick reads the second clause very differently:

He will our ruins, laid in dust, repair;
And the proud heads of many countries wound:

Hebr. He fills, or will fill the carcasses; those ruins of our poor earthly tabernacle. Or, if there be any ellipsis supposed, and supplied by, "He will fill the places, or the world, or the field of battle, with carcasses," it may correspond with those prophecies which point at the gathering all nations to battle, before the universal reign of Christ takes place. And that this is the design and meaning, seems the more probable from the next line, which appears to point at the wicked one, the head of many lands, whom the Lord will destroy by the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming.

Ver.

shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

Ver. 7. He shall drink of the brook in the way] "That is," says Houbigant, "the brook Cedron, I suppose;" David pointing out the passion of our Lord, by a continuance of the metaphor wherewith he began. Jesus was exalted because of his suffering, therefore did he lift up his head. See Hebrews, xii. 2. This is the more general interpretation of the verse. There are some, however, who give it a different meaning, and suppose that by drinking of the brook in the way, is meant the succour and supply of Almighty grace. That water is a usual symbol by which instruction, or rather the influences of the holy Spirit are represented, is evident from Isai. xii. 3. lv. 1. John, vii. 38, 39. According to this sense the meaning of the Psalmist will be, "If it be asked how the Redeemer shall be enabled to execute the various and important offices foretold in the former part of this psalm; the prophet replies, *He shall drink of the brook in the way.* He shall not be left bare to his human nature, which would unavoidably sink; but, through the whole administration of his mediatorial kingdom and his incarnate state, shall be supported with omnipotent succours. He shall drink at the brook of Almighty power: He shall be continually supported by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and therefore shall he lift up his head. By these means shall he be rendered equal to his prodigious task, superior to all opposition, successful in whatever he undertakes, and greatly triumphant over all his enemies." See Hervey's *Meditations*, vol. i. p. 129. and Bishop Stillingfleet's *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 353. They who are inclined to see the first interpretation explained and elucidated, will find ample satisfaction in Bishop Reynolds's fine explication of this psalm, to which we refer the reader with great pleasure. If we consider this psalm, says a writer, as every one should, not only as a prophecy, but a pathetic poem, I think we cannot fail of being charmed as much with the elegance of the composition as we are satisfied of the truth of the predictions which it contains. In the first verse our Lord is seated at the right hand of God, as a place of the greatest dignity which can be conceived; as the partner of his throne and power: agreeably to which, in the second he is invested with his authority, by having the sceptre of his power, and an universal and supreme command even over his enemies, delivered to him. In consequence of this, he receives the homage of his subjects, the free-will offerings of his faithful people, who are as numerous as the drops of the morning dew which overspread the earth. In the fourth verse the sacerdotal is added to the regal office. In the fifth and sixth the Psalmist returns again to describe the exercise of his supreme and sovereign authority; and in the last, he gives a reason why he was exalted to so much honour; namely, as a reward for that most astonishing act of his humiliation; which is expressed very poetically by his *drinking of the brook in the way*; upon which St. Paul seems to have given a comment, when he says, that *being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, &c.* See Philip. ii. 8, 9.

This prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, when he arose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of his Father, from thenceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool; i. e. till Satan, the prince of this world, be confined for ever to the bottomless pit; till all the persecuting powers of earth be destroyed, and till death and the grave shall be no more; ver. 1. The kingdom to which he was advanced, was a spiritual kingdom: the sceptre with which he was presented in the heavenly Sion, was *all power in heaven and on earth*; to be employed for the protection of his subjects and the destruction of his enemies: ver. 2. The laws of his kingdom were the laws of the Gospel; which were to be published from Jerusalem: They who freely offered themselves to publish his laws, and gather subjects into his kingdom, were the apostles and first preachers of his gospel; who waited at Jerusalem, the beauty of holiness, till they were invested with power from on high to execute their commission; and when they went forth among the heathen, to subdue and reduce them to the obedience of faith, they spread his gospel over the known world in a few years, and gathered into his kingdom multitudes of subjects out of every nation under heaven: ver. 3. At the same time that Jesus was seated on his throne as king, he was made high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, to intercede for his people, and be their advocate with the Father: ver. 4. The sceptre was given him as well for the destruction of his enemies, as the protection of his subjects. When, therefore, the potentates of the earth opposed his gospel, and persecuted its publishers, he destroyed them with the breath of his mouth; first, by pouring out his wrath on Judæa, in the excision of its inhabitants and the subversion of its state, and afterwards by executing his vengeance on the persecuting powers of the heathen world, as they rose up to oppose the advancement of his kingdom: ver. 5 and 6. and see Rev. xix. 11, &c. to the end. When Jesus set out upon his warfare against the enemies of our salvation, he drank deep of the cup of sorrow and sufferings; but, in reward for his humiliation, he is highly exalted to the throne of glory at the right hand of God, *that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*; and hence he encourages his followers by declaring, *to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne; even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.* See Green on the Prayer of Habakkuk.

REFLECTIONS.—The glory of our incarnate Saviour is the great subject of the Psalmist's praise.

1. He is exalted to the highest dignity in heaven, and David owns him his adored Lord. *The Lord, Jehovah the Father, said unto my Lord, Jesus the Messiah, Sit thou at my right hand, advanced to the seat of most transcendent glory and honour, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*; enemies innumerable has our Lord to conflict with, the world, sin, Satan, death, &c. but he sits upon the throne, and they must bow before his footstool; some are already subdued, and shortly the conquest will be complete, when the last enemy

P S A L. CXI.

The Psalmist by his example inciteth others to praise God for his glorious and gracious works. The fear of God breedeth true wisdom.

PRAISE ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.

2 The works of the LORD *are* great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

3 His work *is* honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.

5 He hath given meat unto them that fear

enemy shall be destroyed, and all his faithful people made to triumph with him in glory. Hasten, O Lord, this happy day!

2. All power is given him on earth. *The Lord shall send forth the rod, or sceptre, of thy strength, the everlasting gospel, the power of God unto salvation; which, by the Spirit's energy is made effectual to the conversion of the souls of sinners, bowing them to submit to the sceptre of his righteousness; and this went forth first out of Zion, and hath spread to the remotest corners of the earth: rule thou, or thou shalt rule, in the midst of thine enemies; the Redeemer's kingdom will be established in spite of all opposition, and his church rise superior to all the malice of men and devils: yea, such will be the effectual working of his mighty power, that even those whose minds were enmity against him, and their lives open rebellion, shall be convinced, humbled, sue for mercy, and be converted unto him.*

3. His subjects shall be a *willing people*, inclined to offer up themselves, their bodies, souls, and spirits, to his blessed service; cheerfully listing under his banners *in the day of his power*; when in the preaching of the word, accompanied with the demonstration of the Spirit, they shall be drawn to him by the cords of love, and arrayed *in the beauties of holiness*, meet to attend their glorious head, *from the womb of the morning*; and their multitudes shall be as the drops of morning dew. *Note;* (1.) It is of grace that we become his believing people. (2.) There are transcendent beauties in Jesus, effectual when seen to engage supremely the sinner's soul to him. (3.) Though Christ is to the believer all in all, it never makes him neglect internal purity, but makes him aspire after perfect holiness.

4. All is confirmed by the oath of God. *The Lord hath sworn by himself, since he can swear by no greater, and will not repent, for he is without variableness, or shadow of turning; Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek; a priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people; for ever, the efficacy of the one oblation that he offered abiding the same, and he at the right-hand of God, ever living to plead it, and make intercession for us; after the order of Melchizedek, an order of priesthood, prior to and greater*

him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.

6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

7 The works of his hands *are* verity and judgment: all his commandments *are* sure.

8 They stand fast for ever and ever, *and are* done in truth and uprightne's.

9 He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* his name.

10 The fear of the Lord *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever.

than that of Aaron, unchangeable and eternal. *Note;* The hope of the faithful soul is fixed upon the most solid basis, on the all-sufficiency of Jesus, and the oath of the eternal Jehovah. With what confidence then should we expect pardon, grace, and all the blessings of salvation, from the great high-priest of our profession; and how great is the dishonour that we cast upon him, when for a moment we dare question his power and grace, and stagger at promises confirmed by two immutable things, the word and oath of that God who cannot lie?

P S A L. CXI.

הללויה *halleluiab*. THIS psalm in the original consists of as many verses as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Bishop Patrick very reasonably supposes it to be a kind of epitome of the 105th and 106th psalms.

Ver. 2. Sought out of all them that have pleasure therein] Studied, or inquired into by all those who have pleasure therein. Houbigant and Green. Mudge renders it, *Exquisitely contrived for all their purposes.* This is a reflection, says he, arising from a view of the divine wisdom, which unerringly directs all its doings to their proper ends. This appeared by God's whole miraculous dealing with the Jewish nation, which at length safely inflated them in the promised land.

Ver. 3. His work is honourable and glorious] This and the following verses seem to refer to those glorious manifestations of God's power in Egypt; to the passover, which was a gracious memorial of his favour to his people when he slew the Egyptians; to his miraculous provision for them in the wilderness, and to his settling them in their inheritance in Canaan.

Ver. 4. He hath made, &c.] He hath made him a memorial by his wonderful works; the Lord, gracious, &c.

Ver. 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning] Or, as the original word ראשית *reisith* also signifies the *first*, the *principal point*. *A good understanding have all they, &c.* That is, "it is the surest mark of a good judgment, to apply one's self to the strict observance of God's commandments:" or, according to the original, *A good understanding*

P S A L. CXII.

Godliness hath the promises of this life, and of the life to come. The prosperity of the godly shall be an eye-sore to the wicked.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

ing have all they that do it; i. e. who constantly observe this wisdom, this fear of the Lord: this will give them a better understanding of what is good for them, than any politic maxims can infuse into them. The next words may be rendered, the praise of it; i. e. of the wisdom and good understanding of those who fear the Lord: this will procure them such a substantial happiness, as nothing sublunary can possibly bestow upon them. This wisdom is called the fear of God, because deduced from the sovereign right of the Creator to demand the regard and obedience of his creatures: but it is such a fear, as is founded on a belief of, and attention to, all the attributes of the Deity, his goodness and mercy, as well as his justice and power, particularly as they are revealed to us in and through Jesus Christ: it is therefore often in scripture called, the love of God, and trust in God; it is a fear of displeasing him; a desire of imitating him; an affectionate sense of his adorable excellencies; a resolution of conforming ourselves to his will; and, in consequence, a satisfactory confidence of enjoying his protection in all events. The fear of God, thus understood and practised, turns the most awful of the divine attributes into the most consolatory articles of belief. The infinite power of God is no longer terrifying, when through Christ it is disarmed of vengeance; nay, is even matter of joy and delight, when considered as engaged in our behalf. The terrors of his justice need not make us afraid, when not offended by our wilful provocations, and satisfied by the atoning blood; yea, they are converted into supports of our expectations, when we reflect on the security and condition of the divine promises. His holiness will not make us fly his presence, when through Almighty Grace we have endeavoured to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Then all his gracious attributes of goodness to all, of patience and long-suffering to sinners, of mercy to returning penitents, appear more exceeding gracious, and fill that soul with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, which is conscious of the divine favour through the gracious Redeemer, and has habitually and uniformly endeavoured to please and obey its Maker and Saviour: "Happy is the man that thus feareth always." Prov. xxviii. 14. See Dodwell's sermon on Pl. xxxiv. ver. 11.

REFLECTIONS.—We here find the Psalmist,

1. Professing his purpose to praise God with *his whole heart*, with unfeigned sincerity, and warm affection, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation, in social worship, or the courts of the sanctuary.

2. He would take the matter of his song from *the works of the Lord*, the works of creation, providence, and redemption, which are each of them so great and wonderful, and

2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

sought out of all them that have pleasure therein; who make these the delightful subjects of their contemplation, and long to increase their knowledge of them, that they may be more enlarged in love and praise. His work is honourable and glorious in itself, and suited to exalt the glory of the Divine artificer: his righteousness endureth for ever; all the dispensations of his providence and grace are altogether and everlastingly righteous and true, and especially that Divine work of redemption which Jesus wrought out for believers, to justify all who trust in it from every condemnation. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered; they well deserve to be treasured up in our memories; and God hath graciously been pleased to transmit to us, in his word, his wonders of old time, to excite still our wonder and praise: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion, as sinners, to their unutterable comfort, experience in the salvation of Jesus Christ, and in the great and precious promises which are in him; and as appears also in all the instances of his providential care: for he hath given meat unto them that fear him, or, a prey; the spoil of the Egyptians; and, rather than they should want, hath provided in the wilderness, for Israel, bread from heaven; and still he continues to feed his believing people daily with that better bread from heaven, which giveth life unto the world: he will ever be mindful of his covenant, none of the promises of it shall ever fail, nor any of the blessings of it be withheld from his faithful people; and therefore they are bound to say Hallelujah, for mercies so inestimably precious, so gracious, and so free.

P S A L. CXII.

הללויה *halleluiab.* THIS psalm is composed after the same manner as the former, and seems to be a short commentary upon the last verse of it. It sets forth the wisdom of being religious, and the good effects that attend it. Concerning the main subject of it, we refer the reader to the note on Pl. i. 4. Fenwick is of opinion, that the psalm speaks of the Messiah, under the character of *the man that fears the Lord*; declaring that *his seed shall be mighty on earth*, and that *he shall be had in everlasting remembrance*, or be the praise of all ages; and that his horn or kingdom shall be exalted with honour, while Satan, the wicked one, beholds and grieves. These things, says he, cannot with truth or propriety be applied to any but Christ; but in Him, and his seed, or faithful servants, they will all in due time be fulfilled.

Ver. 1. *That delighteth greatly in his commandments*] As He did, whose meat and drink it was to do his Father's will; and of whom, by this character, we may reasonably presume the whole psalm is speaking. Fenwick.

Ver. 4. *And righteous*] Fenwick renders it, *The just one*, meaning the Messiah.

Ver.

5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth : he will guide his affairs with discretion.

6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever : the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings : his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

8 His heart is established, he shall not be

afraid, until he see *his desire* upon his enemies.

9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor ; his righteousness endureth for ever : his horn shall be exalted with honour.

10 The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved ; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away : the desire of the wicked shall perish.

Ver. 5. A good man sheweth favour, &c.] A man that sheweth favour and lendeth, shall do well. He shall support his matters in judgment, ver. 6. For he shall never be shaken, &c. Mudge: who observes, that it seems agreeable to the language to make טוב tob, good, the predicate in the first clause; "a generous man shall look cheerful, and enjoy "himself;" and in the second, it is natural to say that he shall support his matters in judgment. Absalom used the same expression; thy matters are right: It is a common sentiment, that the righteous shall stand in judgment; shall carry his cause, because by his goodness he has made God and man his friends. Fenwick, agreeably to his idea of the psalm, renders the clause thus:

This kind communicative man's our joy;
He in the judgment will his cause maintain,

*Ver. 6. For he by no means can be overthrown;
But every age the Just One's praise shall tell.*

And he observes, that the Hebrew word טוב tob, should be rendered a good thing: "He is a good thing, what we delight in, and esteem our joy; since he is kind, communicative, or ready to lend the gifts or talents of his grace or good Spirit."

Ver. 7. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings] Heb. He is not afraid of ill reports: "He fears not, though his name or religion be evil spoken of, as trusting in the Lord, and knowing that he shall be able to maintain the cause for all his servants in the judgment." Fenwick.

Ver. 8. Until he see his desire upon his enemies] Until he look upon his enemies. i. e. as seeing them all subdued, and made his footstool.

Ver. 9. He hath given to the poor] To the poor helpless sons of Adam. He is distributing his gifts and graces among them, and will ever do it, because his righteousness endureth for ever. Fenwick.

Ver. 10. The wicked] That is, the devil; for the Hebrew here is singular, and so denotes that wicked one, whose power and kingdom must melt away, while he beholds with rage the exaltation of Christ and his servants; and then, the desire of wicked men also (for in the last line the word is plural) shall perish. The expression melt away, is strong, and signifies that his envy shall be like a slow fire in the bowels. The word desire is put for the things themselves which are the objects of desire; as hope or confidence are put for their objects in Job, xvii. 15. xviii. 14.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. The Psalmist opens this psalm with ascribing praise to God, who is to be acknowledged in all he doth for and in his believing people; for by his grace they are what they are.

1. He describes the character of the truly blessed and happy man. He feareth the Lord, and only him; he delighteth greatly in his commandments; he counts obedience his highest privilege, and God's service perfect freedom: he is upright, sincere before God in his professions, and in all his dealings with men just and true: he is gracious, full of compassion, sensibly touched with the distresses of others, and ready to relieve them, and righteous; what he bestows on the necessitous is honestly come by: he sheweth favour, and lendeth; not with a view to his own advantage, but of pure charity to assist the industrious poor, hoping for nothing again; he will guide his affairs with discretion, or his words with judgment; he is careful of what he speaks, that neither hastily, falsely, nor imprudently, his tongue may offend, but that all he saith may be well weighed, and the result of sound reflection and judgment; and in the management of his affairs he acts with such prudence and œconomy, as both to shew piety at home in the becoming provision of his own house, and to have withal a portion to spare for him that needeth.

2. The man who perseveres in this spirit and conduct, is truly blessed and happy; he is the object of God's care and protection; the blessings of grace and love are laid up for him, and God himself is his portion, and his exceeding great reward; his posterity shall partake of his blessing, exalted on earth, and mighty in the grace which is in Jesus Christ. Wealth and riches, as much as God sees will be profitable for him and them, shall be in his house; nor shall his worldly prosperity turn away his heart from God, as it is too apt to do: his righteousness endureth for ever: God will preserve him, and enable him to prosper in his soul, as his substance is increased, and never suffer him to decay or decline. If at any time a dark cloud passes over him, either of temptation in his soul, or of affliction in his body, family, or substance, God will lift up the light of his countenance upon him, and cheer his heart with fresh visits of his love, minister new strength and consolation to his soul, and make the most afflictive dispensations issue to his good.

2dly, The Psalmist goes on,

1. To instance, in other particulars, the blessedness of the man who thus perseveringly feareth the Lord. [1.] His stability is ensured. [2.] The memory of his piety shall descend to latest ages, and his righteousness God will to all eternity remember and reward. [3.] No dangers shall terrify, no evil tidings dismay him; neither the world with all its snares and opposition, nor Satan with all his legions, nor death with all its terrors, shall be able to shake his confidence, or deject his spirit; for his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. [4.] He shall see his desire upon his enemies

P S A L. CXIII.

An exhortation to praise God for his excellency, and for his mercy.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.

2 Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.

3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name is to be praised.

4 The LORD is high above all nations, and

his glory above the heavens.

5 Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high,

6 Who humbleth himself to behold *the things that are* in heaven, and in the earth!

7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;

8 That he may set *him* with princes, even with the princes of his people.

9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

enemies; expecting in faith the salvation of God, he shall see all his spiritual foes finally destroyed, his temporal foes subdued or made his friends, and himself in all things made more than conqueror. [5.] *He shall be exalted to honour*, the highest honour, that which cometh from God, who will remember his labours of love, his charity, liberality, and persevering continuance in well-doing; and at the resurrection-day crown him with glory, honour, and immortality.

2. This blessedness of the righteous will be the envy and torment of the wicked; they shall see it with grief and bitter anguish, and through vexation shall pine away in their iniquities, till at last they shall be cut off from all the good things on which their desires were placed, and doomed to that place of eternal torment, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Lord, gather not my soul with finners!

P S A L. CXIII.

THIS and the five following psalms, were by the Jews called *הַלְלֵל* *hallel*, or *hymns*; they were made use of at the feasts of the new moons, and on other solemn occasions, especially on the paschal night, after they had eaten the lamb. The evangelist alludes to this custom, Matth. xxvi. 30.; Mark, xiv. 26. The intention of this psalm is, to excite men to praise God for his good providence, several instances of which are here mentioned; and particularly his mercy to the Gentile world, in making the barren woman a joyful mother of children.

Ver. 3. From the rising of the sun, &c.] i. e. from the one end of the heathen world to the other. See Mal. i. 11. "His mercies and goodness to mankind, especially that great evangelical mercy, the gift of Christ, shall be solemnly proclaimed and promulgated."

Ver. 6. Who humbleth himself to behold, &c.] Mudge renders the foregoing verse unitedly with this: *Who is as the Lord our God, that sitteth so high, that looketh so low, in the heaven, and in the earth?* In the heaven, says he, is referred to the former, and in the earth, to the latter clause; "Who is there that sitteth so high in the heaven, and looketh so low on the earth?" Since God's glory is above the heavens, ver. 4. it is a great condescension in him to behold and order the things which are in heaven; but a much greater to extend his kind and careful providence even to us who dwell upon the earth. This is an

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observation which hath always had truth, even from the beginning of the world; but then most signally when the Messiah, the supreme God of heaven, came to visit us here on earth in great humility. See Jerem. x. 7.

Ver. 8, 9. That he may set him with princes] There is a plain reference here to Hannah's case and prayer. See 1 Sam. ii. 8. and 2 Sam. vii. 8, 9. *He maketh the barren, &c. may be rendered*, according to the original, *He setteth the barren in a family*; i. e. "causeth her who was barren to have a large family, by making her a joyful mother, &c."

REFLECTIONS.—This psalm seems to refer to the times of the gospel, and to the great salvation accomplished by Jesus our Redeemer.

1. The Psalmist, with repeated earnestness, exhorts the servants of the Lord to the happy work of praise. In all ages redeeming love must be celebrated; and from the rising to the setting sun, whithersoever the tidings of gospel grace shall spread, the name of Jesus shall resound.

2. He suggests the matter of their songs.

(1.) The glory of the Lord Jesus, the great King of kings; to whose universal sway all nations of the earth must bow; and to whom in heaven angels, principalities, and powers are made subject; transcendently great, without an equal, and above all comparison; yea, exalted above all blessing and praise.

(2.) His condescension. *He humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth*; when he vouchsafes to accept the services of archangels, and with his care to preserve their beings, which he gave, vast is his condescension: yet more amazing is it, that he turns his eye on worms of earth, and sinful worms withal; upholds them in life, and with his bounteous hand supplies their wants: but most astonishing of all, that he should humble himself so far, as not only to behold us, but to take our nature, yea, humble himself for us to death, even the death of the cross. Lost in the stupendous thought, the soul bows down in silent admiration, and can only wonder and adore.

3. The dispensations of his providence and grace. [1.] The poor and needy he liberally supplies, raises them from their low estate, and exalts them to honour and dignity, from the dunghill to the throne: such outward changes God sometimes sovereignly works; but spiritually we see

K k

these

P S A L. CXIV.

An exhortation, by the example of the dumb creatures, to fear God in his church.

WHEN Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

2 Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.

3 The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

4 The mountains skipped like rams, and

the little hills like lambs:

5 What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?

6 Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?

7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

8 Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

these things more emphatically fulfilled in those who will be saved by grace; *the poor in spirit, the needy, destitute of all righteousness and strength, lying on the dunghill of sin, and in the dust of spiritual death, by the almighty power of his Spirit he raises from their low estate, pardons and delivers them from guilt and sin, adopts them into his royal house as sons of God, clothes them with the princely robes of righteousness and salvation, and at last crowns these simple faithful believers with glory everlasting, and makes them reign with the princes of his people; with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the glorified saints, who are made kings and priests unto God.* [2.] *He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children:* Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, proved this grace, and rejoiced in the precious gift: and this was in a beautiful sense more nobly fulfilled, when the Gentile world, which had long been barren, and brought forth little or no manifest fruit unto God, teemed with numerous converts, the joy of the church, and whose births were celebrated with the songs of earth and heaven. Well, therefore, in the view of these things, may the Psalmist repeat his exhortation, and we echo back the sound, *Hallelujah.*

P S A L. CXIV.

BISHOP PATRICK supposes, that as the foregoing psalm recites some instances of divine providence to particular people, so this makes a brief narration of some miraculous works of that providence, which respected the whole Jewish nation, and which are very elegantly expressed.

Ver. 1. From a people of strange language] Or, according to the original, *a barbarous people;* such as the Jews esteemed all other nations: though the original word properly signifies only a *stranger, or alien.*

Ver. 2. Judah was his sanctuary] The tribe of Judah is here put for the Jews in general, because Judah was the principal tribe. See Numb. ii. 3., vii. 12., x. 14. A correspondent of Sir Richard Steele's (*Spectator*, No. 461.) has translated this psalm into English verse; and in doing it he perceived a beauty, which was entirely new to him, and which, he says, he was going to lose; and that is, that the poet utterly conceals the presence of God in the beginning of it, and rather lets the possessive pronoun go without a substantive, than he will so much as mention any thing of the divinity there. *Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.* The reason now seems evident,

and this conduct necessary; for if God had appeared before, there could be no wonder why the mountains should leap, and the sea retire; therefore, that this convulsion of nature may be brought in with due surprise, his name is not mentioned till afterward; and then, with a very agreeable turn of thought, God is introduced at once in all his majesty. Mr. Cowley, in his *Davideis*, makes David perform this ode before Saul, when he relieved him from his melancholy; and it was a pretty thought of his, for the subject of it is very well calculated for such a purpose: but from this verse it appears as if it was written after the division of the ten tribes from the kingdom of Judah. So that it was, probably, not composed by David, but by some other person, as a paschal hymn. The reader will observe how exactly the alternate lines correspond with those preceding them throughout the psalm.

Ver. 7. Tremble, thou earth] The LXX read, *The earth did tremble,* in a more easy meaning, as being an answer to the foregoing question; but perhaps not so well suited to the Psalmist's design, which is to let the world know, that as it was from the presence of God among his people heretofore that *the sea fled,* &c. so now there was the same reason for the earth to tremble; as he was still present among them. The answer is elegantly understood, and turned into a command. *A standing water* in the next verse, is rendered by some *a river.* We would just observe, that the *hallelujah,* or, *praise ye the Lord,* at the end of the last psalm, is placed by the LXX, and with much seeming propriety, at the beginning of this.

REFLECTIONS.—The wonders of former days deserve to be kept in everlasting remembrance, both that God may be glorified for them, and we take encouragement from thence to hope still in his mercy.

1. God brought his Israel from Egypt: *They went out, with triumph, wealth, and honour, from a people of a strange language* which they understood not, or *barbarous,* as they accounted the Egyptian tongue, compared with their own. The people of God are thus brought up out of spiritual Egypt, and called from this strange country the world, to join those who speak the pure language of Canaan.

2. Among them his special presence rested, and he was in a peculiar manner their king. *Judah was his sanctuary;* his presence rested visibly in the midst of them; and *Israel his dominion,* among whom he erected a theocracy, himself their

P S A L. CXV.

Because God is truly glorious, and idols are vanity, the Psalmist exhorteth to confidence in him. God is to be praised for his blessings.

NOT unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

2 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?

3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, but they speak not:

eyes have they, but they see not:

6 They have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not:

7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.

8 They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.

9 O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.

10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.

11 Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; he is their help and their shield.

their lawgiver and judge, and exercising the power of civil government among them. Thus does his presence dwell in his living temples, the souls of his people; holiness is written upon their hearts; and, obedient to all his commands and ordinances, they desire to approve themselves his obedient and devoted subjects.

3. To open a passage for them, the sea affrighted fled, and Jordan backwards rolled his overflowing streams. How was the mighty miracle affected? why fled the sea? why skipped the mountains Horeb and Sinai? Why? They felt the present deity; the powers of nature stood controlled before him, and earth shook to its centre. *Note;* (1.) Whatever difficulties are in the way of God's Israel, from seas of tribulation, and mountains of corruption, as easily and certainly shall all hindrances be removed, if they will but believe. (2.) Did rocky Horeb tremble before God? and is thy heart, sinner, more obdurate and inflexible?

4. He gave them waters out of the rock, and, all the desert through, caused the salutary streams to follow them. That rock was Christ; from him still flow, for every believer's use, full streams of grace and consolation, to cheer him in his passage through this world's howling wilderness; nor will he ever leave or forsake his faithful followers, who perseveringly and simply cleave to him, till, from drinking at the streams below, he shall bring them to the fountain-head above, and fill them with eternal consolations and glory in the heavenly Canaan.

P S A L. CXV.

THERE is great reason to think that this psalm was composed in some time of great distress, when the pagan enemies of the Jews began to boast as if their gods were too powerful for the God of Israel: but by whom it was made, or on what particular occasion, there are so many conjectures, says Bishop Patrick, that it will be no presumption to interpose mine, which is this: that when Jehoshaphat saw the vast army which we read of, 2 Chron. xx. 2. composed of several nations, coming against him, and, after his prayer to God for deliverance, was encouraged by a prophet to hope for it, (ver. 14, 15.) and had by the Levites given Jehovah thanks for this hope, he or

that prophet composed this hymn to quicken and confirm the people's faith in God, to which you read he exhorted them, ver. 20. and it is not unlikely that this was the hymn which, by common consent, the singers were appointed to use when they went to encounter those enemies; saying not only those words which were read there, (2 Chron. xx. 21.) *praise the Lord, &c.* but these also, *Not unto us, O Lord, &c.* Dr. Delaney however is of opinion, that this psalm was composed as an *epinicion* or triumphal song for David's victory over the Jebusites; the lame and the blind, &c. (see 2 Sam. v. 6.) it being plainly a hymn of humiliation and thanksgiving to God for a victory gained over a heathen people, who put their confidence in their idols, and despised the God of David: (see from ver. 2 to 8.) And, however this hymn may be adapted to the people of the Jews by many peculiarities, yet it is remarkable, that it has always been used as a hymn of thanksgiving for victories by all princes of true piety from the earliest Christian ages, and very probably from the age of David. See Life of David, book ii. chap. 6.

Ver. 1. Not unto us, O Lord] By the repetition of these words the Psalmist humbly expresses the unworthiness of the Jews to receive the signal blessings wherewith the Lord had favoured them.

Ver. 7. Neither speak they] Or, *Neither breathe they.*

Ver. 8. They that make them are like unto them] Are in this respect as stupid and blockish as those idols themselves, inasmuch as they do not make a regular use of those faculties which God hath given them, in relying upon him only; but on the contrary depend upon such inanimate gods.

Ver. 9. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord] Israel trusteth in the Lord; and so in the following verses the verbs should be read in the indicative; as we find them in the LXX; and the sense requires it to be said, *Israel doth trust, &c.* to mark the difference between their trust and that of the heathen: and thus too it agrees with the latter clause of each period; *their help and their shield.* Israel is the main body of the Jewish nation. *The house of Aaron* comprehends the Levites: they that fear the Lord, seems to take in those, all the world over, who worshipped Jehovah. See Houbigant and Mudge.

12 The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.

13 He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.

14 The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.

15 Ye are blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.

16 The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

17 The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

18 But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.

Ver. 12. The Lord hath been mindful of us] The Lord remembereth us. Mudge: who remarks, that the priest says this upon observing the favourable signal: "The Lord " will certainly bless all those (recapitulating the fore- " mentioned) who trust in him."

*Ver. 14. The Lord shall increase you] The Lord will heap blessings upon you. Here the author turns himself to them, and assures them of the favour of him who made heaven and earth; who therefore would preserve them, and not suffer them to go down among the dead. $\eta\delta$ *iosep*, though. I have translated it generally by all blessings, seems more particularly to intend an addition of days: "The Lord " shall bless you and your sons with length of days, upon " this earth which he has created for you, and where " you pay him the tribute of praise." Mudge; who translates the 16th verse thus, *As to heaven, heaven is the Lord's; but the earth he giveth, &c.* Or it may be read, *The heavens of heavens are the Lord's, &c.**

Ver. 17. The dead praise not the Lord] See on Ps. vi. 5.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Psalmist here,

1. Bids the people of God ascribe not to themselves, but to Jehovah, the glory of their salvation, as derived from his boundless mercy. *Note;* We must be ever in our own eyes nothing, and Christ all in all: to his grace every good in us, or done by us, must be ascribed; and at his feet our crowns in glory will be for ever laid.

2. He answers the taunts of the insulting heathen, who, puffed up with their success, spurned at Israel's God, as unable to deliver his people. *But our God is in the heavens, and from his throne laughs them to scorn; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased,* able to save or destroy at his sovereign pleasure; whose will is law, his power omnipotent, and resistance against it vain. How unlike the boasted vanities of the heathen! their rock is not as our rock; senseless idols, the work of man, fashioned after his form, but destitute of his faculties; they can neither hear, nor see, nor speak, nor feel, nor walk; unable to help themselves, much less their votaries, whose adorations prove them stupid, and senseless as the stock and stone they worship.

2dly, Having exposed the vanities of the heathen, the Psalmist,

1. Exhorts God's people to trust in Jehovah. The house of Israel, however distressed; the house of Aaron, the peculiar servants of the sanctuary, and therefore the especial objects of the heathens' hatred: yea, all that fear the Lord, shall find him *their help and shield: their help in every time of need, to deliver them; their shield in*

every hour of danger, to defend them. *Note;* They cannot fail, whose faith does not; that ensures the final victory.

2. Abundant reason there is, why we should trust in Jehovah. *He hath been mindful of us,* as past experience comfortably testifies, and which should engage us still to commit ourselves to him, confident of finding the same kind remembrance, protection, and care. *He will bless us* with all needful things of this life, and all the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. *He will bless the house of Israel,* the congregation of his church in general, and *the house of Aaron,* his ministers, who labour in the word and doctrine: yea, all *that fear the Lord, both small and great,* every individual believer, whatever his circumstances and condition may be, shall find the blessings of providence and grace exactly suited to his necessities. *The Lord shall increase you more and more,* so far as he sees fit, with worldly goods, and success in earthly affairs; but especially with that best increase of the gifts and graces of his Spirit, enabling them to bring forth fruit unto God; and the mercy not be theirs alone, but descend upon their children: for *ye are the blessed of the Lord,* and whom he blesteth must be blessed; he *who made heaven and earth,* having all power to communicate the blessings that he pronounces on his believing people.

3. They who trust him will praise him, and find abundant matter for their songs. Great is he, and worthy to be praised; *the heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's,* not only the firmament spread over us, but all those things which are within that vail, secluded from mortal eye; the heaven of heavens, where the angelic hosts take up their abode, and glorified spirits dwell, all own him their creator, preserver, and rightful owner, and good as he is great: *the earth hath he given to the children of men,* appointed it for their use, and to be enjoyed to his glory and their comfort: justly therefore is the grateful tribute of thanksgiving due, and who shall pay it, if we do not? *The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence;* those who are gone down into the silent grave can no more join in the sacred choir; those who are dead in trespasses and sins have no heart to praise him. *But we,* the faithful followers of Jesus, who are maintained in life by the bounties of his providence, and are by his Spirit quickened to a better life of grace in our souls; we, as most bounden, *will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore;* while sojourners below, in this delightful work will we be employed; and when removed to that better world, our service there shall be everlasting praise. *Hallelujah!*

P S A L. CXVI.

The Psalmist professeth his love and duty to God for his deliverance: he studieth to be thankful.

I LOVE the LORD, because he hath heard my voice, *and* my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

5 Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was

brought low, and he helped me.

7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling.

9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

11 I said in my haste, All men *are* liars.

12 What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?

13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

P S A L. CXVI.

THIS psalm was probably written by David upon his deliverance from Absalom's rebellion; though some think that it was composed by Esdras at the return of the Jews from Babylon. The Jews were accustomed to sing this psalm with some others after their passover; for which, doubts, they had the direction of some of their prophets, who saw that it represented Christ, the true paschal lamb, singing thus after his last passover, to preserve himself, as it were, for immediate sufferings and death; in full assurance of being heard in that he feared; and with the most affectionate praise and thanksgiving then devoutly offered, and promised also to be continually offered in the courts of the heavenly sanctuary, whither he was going to prepare a place for all his faithful servants: who, therefore, have here a most affecting example of offering praise even in a day of trouble, within the courts of the Lord's house, here on earth, till they come to do it in the Jerusalem above; in the courts of the heavenly sanctuary. See Fenwick and Houbigant.

Ver. 1. I love, &c.] Hebrew, *I love*; i. e. "I am full of love:—I love ardently and most affectionately,"—as commentators well explain it; "And that because *the Lord accepts, or will bear my prayer*; [עֲשָׂה יִשְׁמָעַל,] *helping me, in that I feared; so that in my days of distress or trouble* [אֶקְרָא *ekra*]."—*Ver. 2. I will preach, proclaim, or sing aloud of his goodness.* This place, and also *ver. 13. 17.* seem to require this sense of *akra*. Fenwick.

Ver. 3. The sorrows of death] The Hebrew signifies, *The snares of death.* See *Pf. xviii. 4, 5.*

Ver. 6. The simple] i. e. Those who are upright and sincere, and who make use of no crafty arts, no indirect or unlawful means for their deliverance; or, as the original word likewise signifies, *the little ones*; i. e. those who wholly depend upon God, as little children do upon their parents.

Ver. 9. In the land of the living.] In the Hebrew *the lands*; pointing at the lands or mansions whither Christ

was to go, and prepare a place for all who truly follow him; in the view and full assurance of which, he is represented as saying in the former verse, *Thou hast delivered my soul from death.* See Fenwick.

Ver. 10, 11. I believed, therefore have I spoken] *I believed (for I will speak it; I was very low), I said in my haste, The whole race of man is a lie.* These two verses express the low state of spirits to which he had been reduced. Thus Mudge. Green, referring the verses to David, translates them thus; *I spoke, because I believed it: (I was in great affliction) and I said in my flight, [namely, from Absalom] All men are deceitful.* Mr. Fenwick has it,

I now believe; but yet I own,
So very low I once was brought,
My hurried spirits made me almost say,
Men are all lies;

That is *mere vanity.* This would have been the case, if Christ had not prevailed in those dreadful conflicts with the powers of darkness, to which for our redemption he submitted, and which seem to be here pointed at.

Ver. 13. I will take the cup of salvation] Or, *of deliverances.* The taking this cup was either more solemn in the temple, or more private in the family. The former was the *drink-offering*, or *strong wine, poured out in the holy place*; Numb. xxviii. 7. This is what the Psalmist seems to speak of here, as may be gathered from the 14th, 17th, and 18th verses. Yet the Jews had also in their families a more private cup of thanksgiving, or commemoration of any deliverance received. The master of the family used to begin this, and he was followed by all his guests. The use of it was either daily, after each meal, or more solemnly at a festival. In the daily use of it they had this form: "Blessed be our God, the Lord of the world, who hath created the fruit of the vine." But on the festival day there was joined to it a hymn proper for the day. See *Matt. xxvi. 30.* where the paschal commemoration, or *paschæ-cænum*, advanced by Christ into the sacrament of his blood, was, after the Jewish custom, concluded with a hymn;

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the

LORD.

18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,

19 In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

hymn; and so here with the *cup of salvation* is joined a *calling upon the name of the Lord*; and both the more private and the more solemn performance of this is called the *paying of vows to the Lord*; namely, that thanksgiving and acknowledgment, which men in distress may be supposed to promise upon condition of deliverance, or which, if they promise not, they are however bound to perform, as a due return for their deliverance.

Ver. 15. *Precious in the sight of the Lord*] The word *precious* is not here so to be understood as to signify that which is spoken of to be *desireable* to or in the *sight of the Lord*; for it is the life, and not the death of his servants, which is precious in that sense to God, the great preserver of their lives. But for their *death* to be *precious*, is, in effect, no more than that it is so considered, and rated at so high a price by God, that he will not easily grant it to the will of their enemies. *Loosed my bonds*, in the next verse, means, *Rescued me from the power of death*.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have here,

1. The Psalmist's warm profession of his love to God for the mercies he had tasted, and of his determined dependence upon him. *I love the Lord, because*, &c. or, as the words stand in the original, *I love, because the Lord hath heard my voice, and my supplications*; his gracious condescensions in opening his ear to his requests, and speedily answering his desires, affected his soul with deepest gratitude, and engaged him to make the warmest returns of affection, and to persevere in waiting still upon Jehovah; *therefore will I call upon him as long as I live*. Note; (1.) Every answer to our prayers is a fresh obligation and encouragement to pray without ceasing. (2.) That soul is happy which can with David truly say, *I love the Lord*. (3.) In prayer or praise should our very parting breath expire, and then we shall go where all will be praise.

2. He mentions the deep distress from which God had delivered him. *The sorrows of death compassed me*, such as dying men feel in their agony; *the pains of hell*, such as arise in the conscience from the sting of guilt, or of the grave, which brought me to its very gates, *gat hold upon me*, and seized me as their prey: *I found trouble and sorrow*; trouble which none but God could assuage, and sorrow which he alone could remove. Note; Death is terrible indeed, when accompanied with the fears and pains of hell: blessed be God for Jesus Christ, who hath given us the victory over both.

3. His recourse was to God, *Then*, in the midst of the sorrows I had in my heart, *called I upon the name of the Lord*, the Saviour of the miserable and desperate; and with importunity pleaded, *O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul*, which must infallibly perish, unless thy power and grace

rescue me from destruction. Whenever the sinner thus flies for refuge to the divine mercy in Christ, he will not be cast away, as,

4. David by blessed experience found. *Gracius is the Lord*, I have proved him so to my unspeakable comfort, pardoning my guilt, and delivering my helpless soul; and *righteous*, faithful to his promises, and just in all the dispensations of his providence and grace: *yea, our God is merciful*, infinite in compassions, as all his people must acknowledge. *The Lord preserveth the simple*; those, who without allowed guile, place on him their dependence: *I was brought low*, to the very brink of ruin; yet he magnified his grace the more in my deliverance, *and he helped me*: in consequence of which *my soul was delivered from death*, from temporal, from eternal death, *mine eyes from tears*, and *my feet from falling* into sin, and the pit of death and hell. And cannot every believer witness this by his own blessed experience? but for these compassions of our God, our bodies, long since consigned to the grave, had seen corruption, and our souls had dropped into hell, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Well may we say, *Our God is merciful*.

5. He addresses his soul, and bids it now rest in peace, under the guardian care of this gracious God. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul*; whatever hath troubled thy repose, whether affliction, persecution, temptation, or corruption, since all thy burdens are now cast on the Lord, confidently expect, and quietly wait, to see the salvation of God; *for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee* in all his past dispensations, and therefore deserved to be trusted for all that is to come. Learn, my soul, thus to reason, and trust still in God!

6. He resolves to devote to God's service the life preserved by his mercy. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living*, seeking to glorify Jehovah upon earth, by letting his light shine before men, and telling of his salvation from day to day; or it is expressive of his faith, as looking to that better world where life eternal reigns, and in which he trusted to stand among the glorified throng, and join their everlasting songs of praise.

2dly, We see that,

1. He declares his unshaken confidence in God. *I believed the promises of his grace, of protection here, and glory hereafter, to every faithful soul: therefore have I spoken*, to God in prayer, assured of being heard; and to men with boldness, knowing the truth of what he declared. Note; Faith inspires the heart with freedom of speech; and no danger can discourage the genuine minister of Christ from proclaiming the gospel truths, nor the pious Christian from the profession of them. See 2 Cor. iv. 13.

2. He

PSAL. CXVII.

An exhortation to praise God for his mercy and truth.

O PRAISE the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.

2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us; and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

2. He owns the discouragements that he was under. *I was greatly afflicted*; persecuted by Saul, reviled, and reduced to the greatest distress: and this is in a measure the lot of very many of the righteous. *I said in my haste*, rashly, through the provocation I had received, or *in my flight*, when pursued by Saul or Absalom, *All men are liars*, as having basely forsaken and betrayed him. *Note*; (1.) In fore provocations, and deep afflictions, the faith of God's strongest saints has been sometimes shaken, and some of them have spoken unadvisedly with their lips; but this demands repentance and a fresh application of the atoning blood. (2.) There is a great difference between a surprise of temptation, and wilful and premeditated sin.

3. Overwhelmed with the sense of the goodness of God, he seems at a loss how to express the infinite gratitude that he owes; and resolves with his lips and in his life for ever to proclaim and exalt the great and glorious name of Jehovah. *I will take the cup of salvation*; the drink-offerings which should attend his sacrifice of thanksgiving; and call upon the name of the Lord, praying to him, and praising him for all his mercies; in public, *in the presence of all the people*, and *in the courts of the Lord's house*, paying the vows he had made in trouble, glorying in the profession of his deep obligations to the God of his mercies, and encouraging others to the like open professions of devotion to Jehovah; nor should his lips only be employed in thanksgiving, his life should be for ever devoted to his service. *O Lord, truly I am thy servant*, in all fidelity and zeal; he repeats it to shew the heartiness of his surrender, *I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid*, born of pious parents, and from early youth brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: *thou hast loosed my bonds*; the bonds of sin, corruption, affliction, had bound him; but now, set free, he became the servant of God, whose service is the most perfect freedom. *Note*; (1.) The sacrifice of thanksgiving is the tribute that we are ever bound to pay. (2.) To be the servant of God is the most honourable of all titles; so thought Israel's king. (3.) When grace hath loosed the bands of sin, the powerful pleasing cords of love most pleasingly and divinely bind our hearts to God.

4. He can look forward without fear, or meet death with satisfaction. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*; he will not suffer the wicked to destroy his faithful servants, but preserves them when there seems to be but a step between them and death; and when the hour arrives of their dissolution, their last moments shall tell how dear they are to him, who fall asleep in Jesus; yea, even in their graves they shall be remembered by him, and brought forth with glory at a resurrection-day.

PSAL. CXVIII.

An exhortation to praise God for his mercy. The Psalmist by his experience sheweth how good it is to trust in God. Under the type of the Psalmist, the coming of Christ in his kingdom is expressed.

O GIVE thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.

PSAL. CXVII.

THIS psalm, like the 110th, seems to be altogether prophetic of the joy which all nations should conceive at the coming of the Messiah; to give salvation first to the Jews, and then to all other nations, according to his truth, ver. 2. i. e. his faithful promise. See Gen. xii. 3. St. Paul applies the first words of it to this purpose, Rom. xv. 11. and some of the Jews themselves justify this application.

REFLECTIONS.—This short psalm is full of the most blessed tidings to the Gentile world, who, in the fulness of time, should be called into the fellowship of the gospel, and with the converted Jews become one fold under one shepherd.

1. All the heathen nations are here called upon to praise the Lord: to them the gospel was to be preached; and multitudes who should yield obedience to the faith, would be admitted into the assembly of the church, and join in the songs of redeeming love.

2. Rich matter for their praises is suggested. *For his merciful kindness is great towards us* or *hath abounded over us*; kindness and mercy, vast as the waters of the deluge; abounding to the chief of sinners; extending to millions of lost souls, who accept of free and proffered grace; and securing to the faithful, pardon, strength, comfort, glory, and this eternally, because *the truth of the Lord endureth for ever*, and his faithfulness is engaged to make good to all faithful believers, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, the promises of the everlasting covenant; therefore *praise ye the Lord*.

PSAL. CXVIII.

DR. DELANEY is of opinion, that this psalm was composed by David, after his victory over the Philistines, recorded 2 Sam. xxiii. 1 Chron. xi. and sung in the tabernacle as an epinicion or hymn of thanksgiving to God for this victory. It begins, *O give thanks unto the Lord*, &c. and then goes on in such a flow of gratitude to God, such expressions of trust and confidence in him, and glory to him, and adds to all this such descriptions of his enemies, in such a variety of lights and images, as are the peculiar distinction of David's genius. Life of David, book ii. chap. 9. The psalm seems to be written in the form of a dialogue, in which there are several interlocutors. All the first part was sung by David. At ver. 19, he calls upon the Israelites to open the gates, that he might praise God in the sanctuary; and in ver. 20. the Israelites reply. David then seems to take up the strain at the 21st and 22d verses: the people at the 23d and 24th; David

2 Let Israel now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

3 Let the house of Aarøn now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

4 Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

5 I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, and *set me* in a large place.

6 The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me.

8 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

9 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

10 All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.

11 They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

12 They compassed me about, like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns; for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

13 Thou hast thrust fore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me.

14 The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.

18 The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

David again the 25th, the priests at the 26th and 27th, and David at the 28th and 29th. This was the last of the psalms which the Jews reckoned into their great *ללהלל* *ballel*, or which they sung after their passover, and was therefore probably the conclusion of that hymn which the blessed man Christ Jesus, with his disciples, sung after his last passover. It is plainly most suitable to the occasion; and the learned Jews, both ancient and modern, confess it to speak of the Messiah; to whom the writers of the New Testament have applied it. See Matt. xxi. 42. Acts, iv. 11.

Ver. 5. *The Lord answered me, and set me in a large place,* The Lord answered me with enlargement. Mudge.

Ver. 7. *The Lord taketh my part, &c.* Or, *The Lord is to me among my helpers; therefore shall I look upon them that hate me.*

Ver. 10—12. *All nations compassed me about, &c.* It is very plain from these words, that the neighbouring nations had entered into a league against David, and that this psalm was written before he had destroyed them, and consequently in the beginning of his reign. See 2 Sam. vii. 1. and Pf. lxxxiii. I would just observe to the philological reader, says Dr. Delaney, once for all, that it is familiar with David to couch such images in three words, as would in the hands of Homer be the materials of his noblest, most enlarged, and most dignified descriptions. We have two instances in ver. 12. *They*, that is, all nations, *compassed me about like bees*, and *they are quenched as the fire of thorns*. The reader has here in miniature two of the finest images in Homer; which, if his curiosity demands to be gratified, he will find illustrated and enlarged in the second book of the Iliad. The first of them stands thus transcribed from Mr. Pope's translation, ver. 209, &c.

———— The following host

Pour'd forth in millions, darken all the coast.
As from some rocky cleft, the shepherd sees
Clustering in heaps on heaps, the driving bees:
Rolling and blackening, swarms succeeding swarms,
With deeper murmurs, and more hoarse alarms:
Dusky they spread, a close-embodied croud,
And o'er the vale descends the living cloud:
So, from the tents and ships, &c.

The next is at ver. 534, &c.

As on some mountain through the lofty grove,
The crackling flames ascend, and blaze above;
The fires expanding as the winds arise,
Shoot their long beams, and kindle half the skies.
So from the polish'd arms and brazen shields,
A gleamy splendor flash'd along the fields,
Not less their number, &c.

The candid reader will observe, that here the idea of an army's resembling a flaming fire, is common both to Homer and David: but the idea of that fire's being quenched when the army was conquered, is peculiar to David. Life of David, book ii. chap. 9.

Ver. 13. *Thou hast thrust fore at me.* This apostrophe is strong; and probably directed to some particular person in the battle, who had put David into great danger.

Ver. 17, 18. *I shall not die, &c.* These verses express how near death he thought himself to have been. *I shall not die*, i. e. as I had feared. God had given him some correction, namely, by endangering his person, and putting him in fear, or possibly permitting him to receive some hurt; but had not suffered him to be slain. Perhaps this danger may be that mentioned, 2 Sam. xxi. 15. 17. When a thing is intended to be described in a striking manner, it

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness : I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD :

20 This is the gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.

21 I will praise thee : for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

22 The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner.

23 This is the LORD's doing ; it is marvellous in our eyes.

24 This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD : O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

26 Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD : we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

27 God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us light : bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.

is generally done in the Hebrew by a repetition of the same terms a little varied, or, what comes to the same thing, by being expressed both affirmatively and negatively, as here and in many other places. See Mudge, and Durell's Parallel Prophecies, p. 115.

Ver. 19, 20. Open to me the gates, &c.] If, as we have supposed, this psalm was sung in parts in a public procession to the tabernacle, up mount Sion, the meaning here is, " Now that we are advanced in our procession to the castle of mount Sion, open to me those sacred gates, ye Levites, who are entrusted with being porters there ; that I may go through them into the courts of the tabernacle of God, and there praise him for his great favours to me." The Levites or porters are supposed to sing the next verse, in the passage through the gate.

Ver. 21, 22. I will praise thee, &c.] That is, " And now, being entered into the courts of thy tabernacle, O my gracious God, I pay thee my most humble thanks for having so favourably heard the prayers which I put up to thee in my grievous afflictions in Saul's reign, and for having now fully advanced me to the royal dignity." *The stone, &c.*—that is, " I, whom the great men and rulers of the people rejected, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19.) as the builders of a house do a stone unfit to be employed in it, am now become king over Judah and Israel ; and a type of that glorious king, who shall hereafter be in like manner rejected, (Luke, xix. 14. xx. 17.) and then be exalted by God to be Lord of all the world, and the foundation of all men's hopes and happiness." See Acts, iv. 11, 12. *The head stone of the corner*, means that which joins the walls, and knits the building together ; as David had now joined together the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah under his sole government, and as Christ joined together both Jews and Gentiles. The 22d verse seems to have been a proverbial saying. The two verses may be read thus, *The stone, &c. is made the head of the corner : ver. 23. By the Lord is it so made, and it is marvellous, &c.* Mudge renders the latter, *This is from the Lord ; it was impossible in our eyes.* " It was the Lord's doing, they said ; in their eyes it was a thing beyond all possibility of belief." This is the force of the original.

Ver. 27. God is the Lord, &c.] *The Lord is God, for he hath shone upon us.* Mudge ; who observes, that the people say this, perceiving a divine illumination upon them in answer to their prayer ; ver. 25. And in consequence of the priest's benediction, ver. 26. they recognized Jehovah

for the only God ; as the king does in the next verse. Fenwick renders this verse,

*God is Jehovah, light from him descends.
Come let the sacrifice be bound,
The blood be sprinkled on the altar's horns :*

For we read of no such custom in the law, as binding the sacrifice to the horns of the altar ; and therefore the sense may well be supplied thus, " Bind the sacrifice with cords, and bring it so bound to the horns of the altar, which, after it is killed, are to be sprinkled with the blood of it." Houbigant however, after the Vulgate and LXX, renders it, *Keep the feast, with thick boughs at the horns of the altar ;* which, doubtless, may be justified from the Hebrew. David, says he, a new king, entering Jerusalem, foretels a similar entrance of Christ into Jerusalem ; passing over branches of trees strewed in his way, and going into the temple, even to the horns of the altar.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, How great is the goodness of our God !

1. The Psalmist calls on all to give thanks unto him ; Israel in general, the ministers of the sanctuary in particular, and those that fear the Lord in every place, Jew or Gentile, must adore him the fountain of all good, and own his mercy everlasting.

2. He gives instances of this mercy in his own case. *I called upon the Lord in distress, or out of that strait*, when compassed by Saul, or at the court of Achish, or Ziklag : and *the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place*, enabled me to rise superior to my foes, and brought me to the throne of Israel, in spite of all opposition. Thus did Jesus in the garden and on the cross cry out, and was answered in his resurrection and in his ascension to the right hand of God, to reign till his foes should be made his footstool.

3. He encourages his heart still to trust, and fear not ; God espoused his righteous cause, and therefore, though princes and people concurred with bitter hatred to persecute him, he could confidently lean on Jehovah's Almighty arm, and doubted not but to see his desire accomplished in their defeat and disappointment : so much better is it to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man, even the greatest. The Son of David in faith thus met the combined hatred of earth and hell, and more than conqueror triumphed over them ; and no true believer, dependant on his

28 *Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.*

29 *O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Almighty strength, need ever fear what the world without, or corruption within, can do against him; he may boldly say, Heb. xiii. 6. *The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me.*

4. The number, violence, and inveteracy of his foes but served to magnify the glory of the victory, which by Divine power he had obtained. *All nations* around him, Philistines, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Syrians, severally or confederated, attacked him, but fell before his conquering arm, as the fire among thorns, which, though for a moment furiously blazing, is presently extinguished; yea, though one domestic enemy, more implacable and dangerous than the rest, even Saul, fore thrust at him, or Absalom the son of his bosom; yet the Lord helped him, and he was strengthened. The faithful soul is thus compassed with legions of temptations, from sin, the world, and his own heart, and in a more dangerous manner thrust at by the sin that doth most easily beset him; but, cleaving to Jesus in faith, Almighty Grace supports him, and then he can neither faint nor fail.

5. He rejoices in this salvation of God. *The Lord is my strength, to uphold me, on him alone my soul trusteth and is holpen, and my song;* for ever am I bound to praise him for the power he hath bestowed, and the comforts I have received; and assured I am now of sufficient support, for he *is become my salvation*, undertakes for me; and when I have thus Jehovah for my God, and live by faith in him, all my interests are secure: therefore *the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous*, in mine for the mercies I have received, whilst others rejoice in these mercies conferred upon me, and by their own experience also have the same cause of joy; for every righteous soul, accepted in Jesus, justified through his merit, and renewed by his grace, hath salvation begun; for which, therefore, he is called upon to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

6. He ascribes the glory of all to God; it was not his own power or policy, but *the right hand of the Lord* which saved him, and *was exalted* in the victory wrought on his behalf. *Note:* Whatever conquests we win over corruption, or success attends our labours, we must remember that it is *not I, but the grace of God that was with me;* to him therefore be given the everlasting praise.

7. Past experience emboldens his hope, that he *shall not die, but live*, notwithstanding the persevering malice of his foes, and *declare the works of the Lord*, standing a living monument of his power, grace, and faithfulness: yea, though *the Lord hath chastened me sore*, with the rod of parental correction; yet he *hath not given me over unto death*, but I live, and reign triumphant over all my foes. The Son of David lives, and death hath no more dominion over him; though for a moment, under the chastisement of our peace, his soul was put to grief, and the humanity bruised to the dust for our iniquities; yet he is now alive for evermore, to declare the great salvation of God.

2dly. That the Psalmist here is speaking not of himself, but of his more glorious Son, is evident, Matth. xxi. 42. Acts, iv. 11, 12.

1. The gates of righteousness are required to be thrown open. The gate of heaven, now, through the Redeemer's blood and infinite merit, is opened for himself and all the faithful: he is entered into it to praise the Lord for his great salvation; of which David's return to the temporal sanctuary, in answer to his prayer, after he had been so long an exile, was a type and figure.

2. His humiliation and exaltation are foretold; *The stone which the builders refused, is become the head-stone of the corner;* David, the outcast, is exalted to Israel's throne; and what is better far, Jesus, though rejected by the Jewish rulers and people as the Messiah, and crucified on a tree, is become the head-stone of the corner; angels, principalities, and powers, are made subject unto him, and he is made head over all things to his church, uniting both Jew and Gentile in one glorious temple, and the everlasting object of his faithful people's praise. *This is the Lord's doing*, the contrivance of his infinite wisdom and love, and executed by his divine power, for the salvation of the faithful, and *it is marvellous in our eyes;* angels with admiration behold the undertaking of an incarnate Saviour; and men, for whom this great salvation is wrought, are more peculiarly called upon to wonder and adore. *This is the day which the Lord hath made*, the glorious day of gospel grace, wherein the sun of righteousness, rising from the grave, shines with brightest beams of light and love on his believing people; and all his saints cannot but say, *We will rejoice and be glad in it.*

3. Our praises must now be directed to him exalted at the right hand of God, and become the Prince and Saviour of all the faithful. *Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord, Hofsanna!* let the King of Glory live for ever, cry all his loyal subjects: *O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity:* let our exalted Jesus have the hearts of his people, and the necks of his enemies; be the conqueror of death, hell, and sin, and his kingdom be extended from pole to pole. Or this may also be the prayer of the faithful, in virtue of the exaltation of their King Jesus; who, having all power in heaven and earth, is able to save them to the uttermost, to pardon, strengthen, comfort, sanctify, and glorify them eternally. *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord,* ordained of God to be the Mediator, appointed and enabled to execute the glorious work of redemption, and coming in the fulness of time to accomplish it. Thus, Luke, xix. 38. the people met him with praises; and thus with delight doth the sinner welcome him to his soul, in all the riches of his love and grace, and cry with a transport of affection, "Come in, dear Lord, to me." *We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord; we, the ministers of the gospel of Jesus, declare to you, who believe in and praise him, that ye are blessed of him; we congratulate your happy lot, and ceaseless add our prayers to yours, that every day we may abound yet more and more, and receive increasingly, out of his fulness, all blessings in time and in eternity: in answer to this prayer and sacred benediction, the people, acknowledging their infinite obligations, reply, God is the Lord, the faithful, gracious, ever-living, and ever-loving God, which hath shewed us light, and hath shined on the face of*

P S A L. CXIX.

This psalm containeth sundry prayers, praises, and professions of obedience.

A L E P H.

BLESSED are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

4 Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.

5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

7 I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.

8 I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

B E T H.

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

10 With my whole heart have I sought thee; O let me not wander from thy commandments.

11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

his anointed Jesus, and on us through him, with beams of mercy and grace; therefore are we bound to render the returns of gratitude: *bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar*; the bodies of slain beasts indeed are no more needful, now the body of Jesus hath been once offered; but the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise are the well-pleasing oblation that God now accepts; and the devoted heart, offered up a living sacrifice, shall please him *better than the bullock that hath horns and hoofs*.

4. David closes with his own professions of his confidence in God, and his thankfulness for such an interest in his favour, exhorting every believing soul to join his grateful praises. *Thou art my God, my covenant God, and therefore with heart, lip, and life, I will praise and exalt thee*: and most bounden are we to follow his example. O give thanks unto the Lord, so worthy to be praised, for he is good, beyond all we can conceive, for his mercy endureth for ever, from eternity it was, and to eternity will endure; therefore praise the Lord, O my soul!

P S A L. CXIX.

THIS psalm is supposed to have been written by David under the reign of Saul, in which he was frequently persecuted, but in which also he had some quiet intervals; (see ver. 54.) when he had leisure to write so long a composition, and one laboured with so much art. For, though written under the infallible inspiration of the Divine Spirit, there is great labour manifested in it. It is not only divided into as many parts as there are letters in the Hebrew Alphabet, but likewise each of these parts is divided into eight verses, and every one of these verses begins with that letter of the alphabet which forms the title of the part. Thus each of the eight verses in the first part, termed *aleph*, begins with an *aleph*, as those do in the second part, named *beth*, with a *beth*. For this reason, in the Massora, this psalm is stiled, "The Great Alphabet." It is further remarkable, that in all these verses, except one or two, there is some word or other which signifies the law of God.

There are ten words which are used for this purpose promiscuously in this composition, namely, the *law*, the *ways*, the *testimonies*, the *commandments*, the *precepts*, the *word*, the *judgments*, the *righteousness*, the *statutes*, and the *truth* of God. The psalm contains a great many pious reflections and excellent rules, without any great connection or dependance on each other; tending principally to set forth the excellence of the divine laws: and this want of connection, probably, was the reason why the psalm was written in this alphabetical method; that the initial letters might be a help to the memory of those who were to learn it in the original.

Ver. 3. *They also do no iniquity*] Or, *That also do no iniquity; that walk in his ways. For they commit no iniquity who walk in his ways.* Green and Mudge.

Ver. 5. 6. *O that my ways*] The word here principally signifies, the motions and inclinations of the mind and heart, upon which all our actions depend. *When I have respect unto*, in the next verse, is rendered by Mudge, *When I keep my eye upon*. The original imports a strong application of the mind and heart to the word of God, as opposed to a light and momentary regard, which is only the effect of curiosity, or of mere custom. See James, i. 25.

Ver. 7. *I will praise thee, &c.*] *I do homage to thee in honesty of heart, when I am learning the judgments of thy righteousness.* This expresses the rapture that he is in when learning the laws of God. He cannot, in the sincerity of his soul, refrain from doing homage to God: Mudge; who instead of the word *utterly* in the next verse, after the original, reads, *to any great degree*, and so ver. 43. This petition, possibly, refers to what is said, 1 Sam. xx. 1.

Ver. 9. *Wherewithal shall a young man*] Or, *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way, that he may observe thy word?* The original word זָכַק *zakkah*, rendered, *cleanse*, signifies to *make clean, purify*. See Ps. lxxiii. 13. 2 Sam. xi. 4. But, on the whole, I consider our version as more elegant than the other given above, because it contains a fine and satisfactory answer to the question in the former clause. *Have*

L 1 2

I hid,

12 Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.

13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches.

15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

16 I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word.

G I M E L.

17 Deal bountifully with thy servant, *that* I may live, and keep thy word.

18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

19 I *am* a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.

20 My soul breaketh for the longing *that it hath* unto thy judgments at all times.

21 Thou hast rebuked the proud *that are* cursed, which do err from thy commandments.

22 Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.

23 Princes also did sit *and* speak against me: *but* thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.

24 Thy testimonies also *are* my delight *and* my counsellors.

D A L E T H.

25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.

26 I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.

27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

28 My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.

29 Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.

30 I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid *before me*.

31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies; O LORD, put me not to shame.

32 I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

Ibid, in the 11th verse, signifies, *treasured up*, like something of inestimable value: it may be read, *Have I laid up within*, &c.

Ver. 12. *Blessed art thou, O Lord*] The meaning seems to be this, "Thou, O Jehovah, art blessed; i. e. the supreme God, to whom I acknowledge all blessing and adoration to be due. Teach me therefore thy ordinances, as being the only laws, to which we owe all obedience.

Ver. 13. *With my lips, &c.*] *With my lips do I recount, &c.* This means, that he repeats over and learns by heart all God's laws. Mudge.

Ver. 17. *Deal bountifully with thy servant*] The original word גמל *gamal*, signifies either to do good, or to render or return good: If we understand it in this latter sense, this return must be here considered as a reward, not of merit but of mercy.

Ver. 18. *Open thou mine eyes*] That is, "illuminate the eyes of my mind by thy grace, that I may clearly discern the admirable wisdom hidden in thy law;" for the Hebrew word נִפְלְאוֹת *niphlaoth*, rendered *wondrous things*, signifies *hidden wonders*. The distressed circumstances of the Psalmist, when compared with the magnificent promises made in the law to the righteous, might fill him with perplexity; and as he was unable to reconcile his condition with the letter of the law, he might possibly address God for illumination in this point, which was to him otherwise inexplicable, and, what he elegantly styles it, a *hidden wonder*. See Mr. Boyle on the Style of the Sacred Scrip-

ture. *I am a stranger in the earth*, in the next verse, would be better rendered, *I am a stranger in the land*, as being forced to wander from place to place. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 13.

Ver. 20. *My soul breaketh, &c.*] This may be rendered, *is taken up*, or wholly employed, in longing for, or love to thy judgments.

Ver. 21. *Thou hast rebuked the proud, &c.*] *Thou rebukest the proud; cursed are they that stray from thy commandments.* Houb. and Mudge. The *proud* in this psalm mean the atheistical contemptuous disregards of God and his laws.

Ver. 23. *Princes also did sit and speak*] *Though princes are continually consulting against me, thy servant will make thy ordinances his theme: ver. 24. For thy testimonies are my delight, thy statutes my counsellors.* See Mudge, Houbigant, and Pf. l. 20.

Ver. 26. *I have declared my ways*] *I recount over my ways when thou afflictest me.* Mudge. Affliction made him reflect on his ways, and gave him sufficient reason to pray to God to teach him his ordinances.

Ver. 28. *My soul melteth, &c.*] *Or, My soul droppeth for heaviness; raise thou me, &c.* It has been thought by some, that David utters this sad complaint in compunction for the guilt of his supposed deceit, and the consequences of that deceit, at Nob: But Dr. Delaney vindicates him entirely from any such charge. See Life of David, b. i. ch. 11.

Ver. 32. *When thou shalt enlarge my heart*] *For thou enlargest*

H E.

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.

35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; *and* quicken thou me in thy way.

38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who *is devoted* to thy fear.

39 Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments *are* good.

40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

V A U.

41 Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, *even* thy salvation, according to thy word.

42 So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me; for I trust in thy word.

43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy

judgments.

44 So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.

45 And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.

46 I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.

47 And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.

48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

Z A I N.

49 Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

50 This *is* my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

51 The proud have had me greatly in derision: *yet* have I not declined from thy law.

52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.

53 Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.

54 Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

55 I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.

largest my heart. Mudge. Or, *Because thou hast dilated my heart.* This seems to come from one who feels his heart expanded, after some distress and heaviness which had contracted it. This gives him spirits.

Ver. 33. *Unto the end*] *Quite through*; the Hebrew is, *עקב eikeb, to the heel.* The force of the words seems to be, "Quite through, from head to foot." Mudge.

Ver. 36. *Not to covetousness*] That is, an immoderate desire of worldly goods.

Ver. 38. *Stablish thy word unto thy servant*] *Make good thy word unto thy servant; which will issue in thy fear. Which will be thy fear*; i. e. thy honour; it will turn to thy honour. *There is mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be feared*; i. e. honoured; this would be a foundation of homage to God. So here God's fidelity would make him feared, and gain him honour and homage. Mudge.

Ver. 43. *Take not thy word of truth utterly, &c.*] The judgments of God were that word of truth in which he trusted: to pray God, therefore, not to take them out of his mouth, is the same as to pray that God would act agreeably to his word; for otherwise he could no longer, with any grace, make use of it, or derive any consolation from it. Mudge.

Ver. 45. *And I will walk at liberty*] That is, "Having

"then no such incumbrances upon me as I now have in these straits and difficulties, I will do my duty with the greater cheerfulness and joy." See ver. 32.

Ver. 46. *I will speak, &c.*] Dr. Delaney supposes that here is an immediate reference to Achish, king of Gath, whom he apprehends to have been instructed in religion by David. See Life of David, b. i. c. 24.

Ver. 48. *My hands also will I lift up*] That is, says Mudge, "I will hold up my hands to receive God's law into them: I will be always reading it." Others think that the meaning is, "I will exemplify my love of thy commandments by a diligent and zealous practice of them." Thus, by lifting up the hands, is frequently meant the setting about any action, especially of weight and importance. See Gen. xli. 44. Pf. x. 12. Heb. xii. 12.

Ver. 49. *Remember the word unto thy servant*] i. e. "Be pleased, therefore, in due time to perform the promise which thou hast long ago made me, and concerning the performance whereof thou hast given me an assured hope." See 2 Sam. v. and 1 Sam. xvi. 1 i. 13.

Ver. 54. *In the house of my pilgrimage*] According to the original, *The house of my pilgrimages*: that is, "Whatever places I have wandered to, during Saul's persecution of me."

Ver.

56 This I had because I kept thy precepts.

C H E T H.

57 *Thou art* my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words.

58 I intreated thy favour with *my* whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.

59 I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

60 I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

61 The bands of the wicked have robbed me: *but* I have not forgotten thy law.

62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.

63 I *am* a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.

64 The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.

T E T H.

65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word.

66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.

67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

68 Thou *art* good, and doest good: teach me thy statutes.

69 The proud have forged a lie against me: *but* I will keep thy precepts with *my* whole heart.

70 Their heart is as fat as grease; *but* I delight in thy law.

71 *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

72 The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

J O D.

73 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

74 They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.

75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* right, and *that* thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

76 Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.

77 Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law *is* my delight.

78 Let the proud be ashamed: for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: *but* I will meditate in thy precepts.

79 Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.

80 Let my heart be found in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.

C A P H.

81 My soul fainteth for thy salvation: *but* I hope in thy word.

82 Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying,

Ver. 56. This I had, &c.] That is, "this sweet composure of mind, this cheerfulness of spirit, under all these afflictions."

Ver. 61. The bands of the wicked, &c.] *The troops, &c.* "I have been beset with troops of wicked men, who stripped me of all I had." Houbigant, after the LXX and Vulgate, reads, *The cords or snares of the wicked have bound, or entangled me.* See 1 Sam. xxiii. 26.

Ver. 66. Teach me good judgment] The Hebrew words properly signify, a goodness of taste, with relation to the palate; and it is only figuratively, and by way of analogy, that they signify a goodness of judgment, or the good sense and discernment of the mind.

Ver. 70. Their heart is as fat as grease] Or, *Is gross, as with fat.* Or, *Gross as fat.* Houb. By this fatness of the heart, stupidity, dullness, and earthly-mindedness are designed, as *pinguis Minerva* signifies among the Latins. The lean, membranous parts, are, according to the naturalists, the only sensitive ones. It has been well observed,

that the translation of this place in our Liturgy, *Their heart is as fat as brawn*, is very improper; because, swine's flesh not being eaten among the Jews, they could have no knowledge of brawn; nor is there a word in their language to express it.

Ver. 78. For they dealt perversely with me] *For they causelessly wrest my steps.* The original has the signification of perverting, or wresting the steps of any one so as to throw him down, or trip up his heels. "Let the proud be disappointed, who endeavour to trip me up without cause." Mudge.

Ver. 79. Let those that fear thee, &c.] The sense of this is much the same with that of the 74th verse; that good men, seeing what God had done for them, should turn themselves to him, take encouragement from him, and recognize the righteousness of God's laws, which protected his friends.

Ver. 82. Mine eyes fail] That is with attentively looking around me, to see from whence that promised deliverance

ance

When wilt thou comfort me?

83 For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.

84 How many *are* the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?

85 The proud have digged pits for me, which *are* not after thy law.

86 All thy commandments *are* faithful: they persecute me wrongfully: help thou me.

87 They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.

88 Quicken me after thy loving-kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

L A M E D.

89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

90 Thy faithfulness *is* unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.

91 They continue this day according to

thine ordinances: for all *are* thy servants.

92 Unless thy law *had been* my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

93 I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.

94 I *am* thine, save me: for I have sought thy precepts.

95 The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: *but* I will consider thy testimonies.

96 I have seen an end of all perfection: *but* thy commandment *is* exceeding broad.

M E M.

97 O how love I thy law! *it is* my meditation all the day.

98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they *are* ever with me.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation.

100 I understand more than the ancients,

ance will come. *A bottle in the smoke*, ver. 83. means a bottle of skin or leather, (the only bottles then in use,) which being hung up in the smoke, and by that means parched and dry, aptly represents one worn out and dried up with long suspense and expectation. The author of the *Observations*, however, gives a different interpretation. He observes, that leathern bottles were a necessary part of the furniture of an Arab tent; and out of them they frequently drink. These are very uncouth drinking vessels, in comparison of cups of silver or gold, such as were anciently used in the courts of princes; agreeably to what we read in 1 Kings, x. 21. where we are told that the magnificence of Solomon suffered no drinking-vessels in his palace which were not of gold; none of silver, it being nothing accounted of in his days; whereas it should seem in the preceding reigns, cups of silver, as well as of gold, were used in the royal houses. And to the difference between these vessels of silver or of gold, and these goat-skin bottles, the Psalmist seems to refer when he says, *I am become like a bottle in the smoke*; "My appearance in my present state is as different from what it was when I dwelt at court, as the furniture of a palace differs from that of a poor Arab's tent, among whom I dwell (and which was remarkably smoky)." Just thus the prophet laments that the precious sons of Zion, comparable to *fine gold*, or *vessels of fine gold*, sunk in their estimation, and were considered as no better than *earthen pitchers*, the works of the hands of the potter. Lam. iv. 2.

Ver. 84. *How many are the days of thy servant*] That is, "how long shall the days of that trouble and affliction last, which I am now forced to endure under the persecutions of Saul?"

Ver. 85. *The proud, &c.*] If we understand the latter clause of this verse to refer to *pits*, the meaning is, "which insidious designs against an innocent person are not after thy law." But Mudge renders it thus: *The proud dig pits for me, who are not according to thy law*: i. e. who act and behave without any regard to it; who have renounced all conformity to it. See ver. 150. Houbigant, instead of *pits*, reads *words or discourses*. *The proud have agitated discourses, concerning me, which are not according to thy law*.

Ver. 87. *They had almost consumed me upon earth*] *They had almost destroyed me in the land*: The Land of Judah. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 26.

Ver. 89, 90. *For ever, O Lord, thy word, &c.*] Or, *Thou art for ever, O Lord; thy word, &c.* Mudge renders it, *Thy word, O Lord, is for ever; firmly fixed in heaven*. God's word, and his truth or faithfulness, upon which his laws are founded, are as fixed as the heaven and the earth; for they owe their durability to the same word and truth.

Ver. 96. *I have seen an end of all perfection*] i. e. "I have observed that all human things, how complete soever they may seem, such as wisdom and policy, and riches and power, are exceeding frail, and soon come to an end:" *but thy commandment is exceeding broad*: that is, "The observance of thy commandments gives durable satisfaction here, and the good effects of it will extend themselves to all eternity." Green renders the first clause, *I have seen bounds, and an end to every thing, &c.* "I have seen that all human wisdom is limited; but that of thy commandments is infinite."

Ver. 98. *For they are ever with me*] *For they* (i. e. thy commandments) *are ever with me*, always before me, to direct and advise me in right, to exhort and restrain me from

because I keep thy precepts.

101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

102 I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth.

104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

N U N.

105 Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

106 I have sworn, and I will perform *it*, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

107 I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.

108 Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.

109 My soul *is* continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.

110 The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.

111 Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.

112 I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, *even unto* the end.

S A M E C H.

113 I hate *vain* thoughts: but thy law do I love.

114 Thou *art* my hiding-place and my shield: I hope in thy word.

115 Depart from me, ye evil doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.

116 Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

118 Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit *is* falsehood.

119 Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.

120 My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.

A I N.

121 I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.

122 Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.

123 Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.

124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.

125 I *am* thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.

126 *It is* time for thee, LORD, to work; for they have made void thy law.

from wrong. For the same reason verse 99, *I have more understanding than all my teachers*: All those doctors of the law, of whom I have formerly learned; all those *ancients*, ver. 100. those elders and grave counsellors, who perhaps rely more on their own wisdom and sagacity, than on that wisdom which springs from a meditation on thy truth. Such meditation, such an employment of parts, says Mr. Boyle, often invites God to increase them; as he who had most talents committed to him, was, for improving them to his Lord's service, trusted with more.

Ver. 109. *My soul is continually in my hand*] See Job, xiii. 14. Some copies read *thy hand*, and they are followed by Appolinarius, and the Ethiopic and Arabic versions: but the present seems the more proper reading, as the expression denotes a state of constant danger. See 1 Sam. xxviii. 21.

Ver. 113. *I hate wild imaginations*] The original word *דְּמִיוֹת* *seiphim*, signifies the shootings or branchings of the mind, all wild roving fancies, (such was the heathen theology) in opposition to the truth and solidity of the law. Mudge.

Ver. 114. *Hiding-place*] Or, *Covert*.

Ver. 117. *I will have respect unto*] Or, *I shall delight myself in*.

Ver. 118. *For their deceit is falsehood*] *For their falsehood shall prove a lie*: their falsehood to God, in abandoning his law, shall deceive them. Mudge. Some render the words, *For their cunning is falsehood*: but Houbigant, *For their elation is vain*.

Ver. 119. *Thou puttest away, &c.*] *Thou caushest all the wicked of the earth to sink like dross*. Mudge. Or, *Thou destroyest the dross, all the wicked of the earth; therefore, &c.*

Ver. 121. *Leave me not*] *Thou wilt not leave me*. Mudge.

Ver. 126. *It is time for thee, Lord, to work*] Or as some render it, *It is time to perform to the Lord*. Or, *It is time to execute judgment*. Bishop Hare. The phrase as it stands in our version, means the same as the last reading. "It is time for thee to display thy power in the deliverance of me, and in the destruction of my enemies; who, as far as they can, have made void thy law, by not only transgressing

127 Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.

128 Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts concerning all *things to be right*; and I hate every false way.

P E.

129 Thy testimonies *are* wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.

130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

131 I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

132 Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

134 Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.

135 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: and teach me thy statutes.

136 Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

T S A D D I.

137 Righteous *art* thou, O LORD, and upright *are* thy judgments.

138 Thy testimonies *that* thou hast commanded *are* righteous and very faithful.

139 My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.

140 Thy word *is* very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

141 I *am* small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts.

142 Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, and thy law *is* the truth.

143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments *are* my delights.

144 The righteousness of thy testimonies *is* everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

K O P H.

145 I cried with *my* whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes.

146 I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.

147 I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.

148 Mine eyes prevent the *night-watches*, that I might meditate in thy word.

149 Hear my voice according unto thy loving-kindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment.

150 They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law.

“greeting, but also rejecting it; as if they could wholly lay aside not only the duties, but also the penalties annexed to the breach of it.”

Ver. 128. *Therefore I esteem, &c.*] *Therefore I keep straight on, according to all thy commandments: every false part I hate.* See Houbigant and Mudge. But some render it, *Therefore all thy precepts, even all, have I approved; and I hate, &c.*

Ver. 129. *Thy testimonies are wonderful*] Namely, on account of the excellent wisdom contained in them. Mudge renders the first clause of the next verse thus: *The opening of thy words causeth a light*: “Thy words are no sooner opened, than there streams a light from them.” The 131st verse should be rendered, *I lay open my mouth to draw in my breath; for, &c.* which expresses the great vehemence of his desire.

Ver. 136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes*] *Mine eyes run down streams of water.* The genius of the language requires that it be so translated; not *streams of water come down mine eyes.* See Houb. and Mudge. Schultens reads, *Mine eyes are [as it were] drenched in rivers of waters.*

Ver. 139. *My zeal hath consumed me*] See Pf. lix. 9. “My zeal towards thy law, which my enemies violate and contemn.” The original of *very pure*, in the next

verse, is, *tried in the fire*; an allusion to metals, which are perfectly refined in the furnace and purified from all dross. Thus, in a spiritual sense, God’s word is *very pure*; i. e. perfectly good, without any mixture of error, or indulgence of vice.

Ver. 148. *Mine eyes prevent the night-watches*] The Jews anciently divided the night into three watches, which began at what we now call six of the clock in the evening, and consisted each of four hours: the Romans afterwards introduced among them the custom of dividing it into four watches; consisting of three hours each, as well as of dividing the day and the night into twelve hours a-piece. David intimates, that he meditated on God not only in the day-time, but also in the several divisions of the night, wherein different soldiers, or different parties of soldiers, were appointed to watch or keep guard. In all these, or at least during a considerable part of each of these, he was thus wakeful and contemplative. See Pf. lxxiii. 6. It may be proper just to observe, that there is nothing for *night* in the Hebrew. The word signifies *watches* in general. See Exod. xvi. 24.

Ver. 150. *They draw nigh, &c.*] *They draw near that pursue me with malicious subtlety: Men far removed from thy law.* —Ver. 151. *Do thou draw near, O Lord, since all, &c.*

151 Thou *art* near, O LORD; and all thy commandments *are* truth.

152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.

R E S H.

153 Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.

154 Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.

155 Salvation *is* far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.

156 Great *are* thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments.

157 Many *are* my persecutors and mine enemies; *yet* do I not decline from thy testimonies.

158 I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.

159 Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy loving-kindness.

160 Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever.

S C H I N.

161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.

162 I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

163 I hate and abhor lying: *but* thy law do I love.

164 Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments.

165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

166 LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.

167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.

168 I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways *are* before thee.

T A U.

169 Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.

170 Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.

171 My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.

172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness.

173 Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

174 I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law *is* my delight.

175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.

176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.

Ver. 160. Thy word is true] *The beginning of thy word was truth; and to everlasting shall every judgment of thy righteousness be so.* "God's word, and every article of his law, was, "and ever will be truth, first and last: what he spoke first "was truth, and so will be every determination of his to "the end of the world." Houbigant and Mudge.

Ver. 161. Princes] The rulers and prime ministers of thy kingdom. *But my heart standeth in awe*; namely, so as to do nothing contrary to thy word in my own vindication. See 1 Sam. xxiv. 6. xxvi. 9.

Ver. 164. Seven times a day do I praise thee] That is, probably, several times: a determinate number for an indeterminate, as is common in scripture.

Ver. 165. Nothing shall offend them] Or, according to the original, *There is no scandal to them*: i. e. "They shall fall "upon no stumbling-block, into no snare which their enemies lay for them;" or, "They shall be in no danger "from those snares and temptations which the world is "full of, and which frequently bring other men to sin "and ruin."

Ver. 168. For all my ways are before thee] What is the

meaning of a man's ways being before God, will best be known by parallel phrases; such as *walking before God*, or *in his sight*; which signify to live piously, so as to be approved by him. Here then, though it is certain that all men's actions are seen by God; yet *their ways being before him*, will best be interpreted by, their walking or living piously.

Ver. 171. My lips shall utter praise] *A praise*, or a hymn of praise; for so it corresponds in the next verse; *My tongue shall sing thy word*.

Ver. 176. I have gone astray, &c.] "I have wandered "like a sheep which is lost, driven from place to place during "these tedious persecutions;" *seek thy servant*; that is, "Be thou pleased, like a careful shepherd, to look after "me, and to put me in the right way of escaping all the "dangers to which I am exposed, and of recovering my "liberty, rest, and peace."

Admirable and most affecting, says Mr. Fenwick, are all the parts of this psalm. It first declares the blessedness of all who sincerely walk in the law of the Lord; and then proceeds to the most earnest and devout breathings for grace

grace and power to do it in all circumstances. The whole seems to breathe the spirit, and to be fitted for the mouth of our ever-blessed and adorable Head; as being every where adorned with that humility, meekness, compassion to the souls of men, and fervent love to the law of God, of which he vouchsafed to be the great example, when he came humbling himself in the form of a servant. And besides, there are several expressions in it, which, in their full and proper sense, could suit no mouth but his. These, if devoutly observed, may help us to find him speaking to our hearts, in every part of it; filling them with charity, and a true cordial love to that whole mystical body for which he came to make intercession, and did it always as for himself, and his own soul. It only wants to be considered therefore as a pattern and most affecting example, given by their glorious head to every member of that body—as what should lead them to exercise their hearts in such devout aspirations; to unite their spirit and their prayers to his: striving to attain, according to our measure, the like devout and heavenly affections. Viewed in this light, it would lead us to adore his mercy, in condescending to come and make himself our pattern and great example; fulfilling all righteousness, and all that the prophets had spoken concerning him.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, While happiness is the universal pursuit, we might wonder to hear the general murmur of disappointment, and to see those who have most earnestly engaged in the search as far removed from it as at the beginning: the reason is, men mistake essentially; and, not knowing where the true joy is to be found, continue seeking rest and finding none. The Psalmist here therefore points out the way, and they who are wise to follow him perseveringly, will find therein happiness present and eternal.

1. He describes the truly happy. They are *undefiled in the way*; found in Christ the way to glory, washed in his blood from every spot of sin, and sincere in their desire to please God in all things; and *walk in the law of the Lord*, guided by it as their rule of duty: *they keep his testimonies*, his revealed will, as a sacred deposit, solicitous to obey the commands, and observe the instituted ordinances, without daring to add thereto, or diminish therefrom, and *seek him with the whole heart*, in ceaseless prayer looking for strength and help from him; cleaving to him with undivided affection, and desiring daily to love him more, and serve him better. *They also do no iniquity*, they have no allowed guile, nor make sin their practice or delight; and their new man, the divine nature of which they have partaken, doth not commit sin: *they walk in his ways*, whatever trials, temptations, and allurements would discourage or ensnare them; they make strait paths for their feet, and turn not aside to the right hand or the left. My soul say, *Is this character thine!*

2. He prays, according to God's commands, that he may be able to approve himself faithful. *Thou hast commanded us*, and thy authority is sovereign, thy title to our obedience unquestionable, as the Creator, Preserver, and above all the Redeemer of man, and therefore we are bound to *keep thy precepts diligently*, with that ardour, perseverance, and fidelity, which is so much our duty. *O then that my ways were made so direct*, will every true-hearted believer say with the Psalmist, *to keep thy statutes!* More than human strength

is necessary to enable us to walk and please God; and therefore to him must our prayer be directed, that he may lead us in the way that he commands, and write on our hearts the law that he enjoins.

3. He promises himself the comfort of such a conduct. *Then shall I not be ashamed*, either of my hope towards God, as delusive, or of appearing before him in his worship, or of my profession before men, *when I have respect unto all thy commandments*, look at them as my directory, esteem them all to be right, and, without reserve or exception, desire to have my will and ways conformed thereunto; *for this is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, we have our conversation in the world.*

4. He resolves to praise God *with uprightness of heart*, when he shall have learned his righteous judgments, or the judgments of his righteousness, his commandments, which are altogether righteous, or the dispensations of his providence, which are conformable to the strictest justice. Much he had known, more he had yet to learn, and all would serve to minister matter for his praises.

5. He purposes, through God's grace, to approve his fidelity unshaken. *I will keep thy statutes*; such is my fixed desire and design: *O forsake me not utterly*; if but a moment left of thee, I cannot stand upright; if forsaken by thee, I instantly must prove an apostate; but leave me not, Lord, and then I shall walk and not be weary, and run and not be faint. May my soul thus ever purpose and pray!

2d, Youth is the time to serve the Lord; and happy they who seek him early.

1. The question is put, *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?* the way of all flesh is corrupt and polluted; and young persons exposed to especial temptations from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, defile the conscience, and plunge them into perdition and destruction; great need therefore have they to inquire how they may be preserved from *the pollutions of the world.*

2. The answer is given. *By taking heed thereto according to thy word*, or *by observing what is according to thy word*; this chart will enable him to steer clear of the rocks, on which others make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

3. David professes his own attachment to God, and prays for wisdom, direction, and support. *With my whole heart have I sought thee*; thy word to teach, thy grace to guide me: *O let me not wander*, as my poor sinful heart is too prone to do, *from thy commandments.* A child of God is ever jealous, knowing his weakness, lest his heart should err from the way; and therefore, to prevent it, he desires to say with David, *Thy word have I hid within my heart*, mixed with faith, fixed in my memory, and treasured up as the most valuable possession, and the grand preservative, *that I might not sin against thee*; having an answer ready to every temptation, and a constant warning from it of the evil, danger, and baseness of sin. *Bless'd art thou, O Lord!* for all thou hast done for me; infinitely blessed in thyself, thou dost delight to bless thy people: *teach me thy statutes*, all that I yet know is very imperfect, my own researches are weak and poor; thou, Lord, must teach me, or I shall never know as I ought to know, or be truly wise unto full salvation.

4. He reflects with satisfaction on the past. *With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth*; telling of

God's word, its doctrines and precepts; exhorting others to all holy obedience, and speaking his own experience of the excellence of the good ways of God. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies*, as my supreme happiness and delight, *as much as any worldly doth in all his riches*, or *above all riches*, counting them but dung and loss, compared with a sense of God's love, the unsearchable riches of Christ, the inestimably precious promises, and the joy arising from a constant adherence to him.

5. He resolves from the past experience of the blessedness of the ways of God, to persevere in them. *I will meditate in thy precepts*, with them shall my thoughts be occupied rising up and lying down; and, inwardly digested, they shall not only be stored up in the memory, but afford the most sweet refreshment to my soul; *and have respect unto thy ways*, or *look* unto them, as the traveller eyes the path before him, careful not to deviate from the right way. *I will delight myself in thy statutes*; they have been my joy, and every day the more I know of them, the farther I walk in them, the greater my delight shall be: *I will not forget thy word*, ever upon my heart I will keep it, ready to answer every emergence, to warn me when I err, to direct me when I doubt, to strengthen me when I am tempted, to comfort me when I am dejected, to recover me when I am fallen, and to preserve me when I stand. Reader, with self-application inquire into thy experience, and see how far it corresponds with that of the blessed Psalmist.

3d, We have,

1. The Psalmist's prayer. *Deal bountifully with thy servant*; every blessing that we can hope for, comes from the mere bounty of God, who giveth liberally to those who ask him, and upbraideth not; as his servants we must depend upon him, and shall be directed and supported by him; *that I may live*; by sin our natural life is forfeited, our souls sunk in spiritual death, and liable to eternal death; well may we therefore cry, That I may live, *spiritually* by the quickening power of Jesus, *eternally* through the free gift of God, and *temporally* as long as it shall be for God's glory; this being the only purpose for which a good man wishes to be here: *that I may keep thy word*, faithful myself, zealous to spread the knowledge of it, and to preserve it pure and uncorrupt from every adulteration: and that I may do so, *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law*; we are by nature blind to spiritual objects; the wonders of God's word are far beyond the keenest eye of enlightened reason, 1 Cor. xi. 14. Till Jesus opens our understandings, we cannot understand the scriptures aright, Luke, xxiv. 4, 5.; but in his light, we shall see light, behold the mystery unfolded, a righteous God just in pardoning, a holy law magnified to the uttermost, Christ the end of it for righteousness to the sinner, and the guilty and helpless pardoned, and saved both from the condemnation and the bondage of the law. Lord, may I see daily more distinctly and clearly these wondrous things!

2. He pleads with God. *I am a stranger in the earth*, my abode is short here, and quickly I am to pass from this changing scene, having here no abiding city, therefore *hide not thy commandments from me*, but show me how to act in this land of my pilgrimage, guide me safely through it, and teach me the nearest road to that eternal home whither I desire to go. Note; (1.) It is a reflection we should often make, that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, that

as such our affections may be disengaged from it. (2.) They who are most habitually living under the influence of this truth, will be most importunate to obtain strength and support from God in their journey through time into eternity, that they may never think of taking up their rest in this strange and polluted land.

3. He professes his eager longings after God's word, to know it more fully, to obey it more zealously: *his soul breaks* with the vehemence of the desire, *and at all times*; it was not a sudden fit of devotion, but his habitual temper. Ah! how unlike him are too many of us!

4. He gives the character, and denounces the condemnation, of the wicked. They are *proud*, impiously rejecting God's government, despising his law, and contemning his threatenings; or they are vainly puffed up with the conceit of their own goodness and excellency above other men; of all sins, perhaps, in God's sight the most abominable. *They err from thy commandments*; whether openly profane, or proudly self-righteous, they alike fatally err, and the wrath of God abideth on them; they are *curfed*, the rebukes of God pursue them; as the rebellious and proud of old have felt, whether angels or men; and as to eternity will be proved, when the Judge of quick and dead shall finally determine the sinner's everlasting doom.

5. He begs to be preserved from the reproach and revilings of men, for such have ever been the lot, more or less, of the best and greatest saints of God; let us then never think it strange to share with them. *Remove it, or roll it from me*, as a heavy load, for *I have kept thy testimonies*: this is the cause for which I suffer, for my fidelity; and suffer what I may, to thy testimonies will I still adhere, in spite of all the scorn and opposition even of the greatest. *Princes also did sit and speak against me*; the great men of Saul's court against David, and the rulers against Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 8. And thus the mighty and noble have too generally done against the poor and despised followers of Jesus; but may we ever be enabled to say with the Psalmist, *Thy servant did meditate in thy statutes*; inattentive to their revilings, undisturbed in his meditations, and steadily persevering in the path of duty. Nay,

6. He still found in the law of God his supreme delight. *Thy testimonies also are my delight*; in them I find a joy which the world can neither give nor take away: nay, as our tribulations abound, our consolations will usually abound also; so that the world's enmity contributes but the more to our comfort; *and my counsellors, or the men of my counsel*; he consulted not with flesh and blood, but with better advisers, the scriptures of truth; and we are then sure that we are right, when God's word is thus our constant guide and rule, and shall ever find the comfort of following its blessed directions.

4th, We have,

1. The Psalmist's complaint, and humble plea; for every believing soul must expect to meet with trials. *My soul cleaveth unto the dust*; sunk under disease of body, or dejection of mind, and ready to drop into the grave; or feeling the vile affections of a fallen nature, attached to some earthly good, light, vain, and unsatisfactory, as the dust the wind scattereth. Ah, Lord! how often does this foolish heart of mine thus cleave to the dust! *Quicken thou me*; restore my body to health, raise up my drooping spirits, and especially enliven my dead heart, that in warm affections

affections it may ascend to thee, and leave this vile earth, and all things in it, far behind; according to thy word, on the promises of which I place my dependance, and thence draw my encouragement to pray, and expect an answer of peace.

2. He casts his care upon God, proved by past experience so ready to hear and help him, for which he resolves to render continual praise: *I have declared my ways*; either his sinful ways which he lamented; or his distresses, which he spread before the Lord; or the holy purposes of his heart, which in prayer he had uttered to him; and thou *heardest me*, pardoning, pitying, relieving, confirming, strengthening me. A gracious soul has thus ever one to go to, who is as able to relieve all his wants, as he is ever ready to hear his prayer. What an unspeakable comfort! *Teach me thy statutes*, how I may walk and please thee, in gratitude for the mercy that I have received. *Make me to understand the way of thy precepts*; I want no higher teaching than thy word, opened by thy Spirit: *so shall I talk of thy wondrous works*; thus instructed, I shall be able to speak of them with understanding, with boldness, with delight. *Note*: We shall then speak of the things of God feelingly, and with effect, when we speak experimentally, from what we have known in our own souls.

3. He prays for help in his distress, and preservation of his soul from error and sin. *My soul melteth, or drops, for heaviness*; either through the pressures of affliction, temptation, desertion, or corruption; and, feeling his own weakness, he turns his eyes to one mighty to save; *Strengthen thou me according to thy word*, with such might in the inner man, that I may be able to conflict with and overcome the trials that I meet with; and this according to the promises which thou hast given me, to engage my dependance, and be my support. *Remove from me the way of lying*; or rather, *the way of falsehood*; keep me from all errors in principle and practice, that I may not deviate from the doctrines of truth, or from the instituted ordinances of worship. *Grant me thy law graciously*, which is the great preservative; and matter of infinite favour it is, that this blessed word is so fully made known to us, so kindly vouchsafed to us. Most inexcusable are those, who go to hell with bibles in their hands.

4. He declares what has been his choice, and what is still his purpose, and trusts that in this way he shall know no shame. *I have chosen the way of truth, Christ*, who is eminently *the way and the truth*; and his word, this he chose, convinced of the excellence of the way, and renouncing every other. *Thy judgments have I laid before me*, as the pattern after which I fain would fairly copy. *I have stuck to thy testimonies*, with unshaken steadiness, in spite of every effort of temptation to make me quit this hold. *O Lord, put me not to shame*; let me never be ashamed of my confidence, as disappointed of my hope; or a shame to my profession, as unfaithful; and hereunto will every believer heartily say, Amen. *I will run the way of thy commandments*, with cheerfulness, diligence, and delight, when thou shalt enlarge my heart; for from him all the ability is derived. It is his love shed abroad that can alone give wings to our soul, and his quickening Spirit make our feet to move swift and steady in the way to glory.

5th. A wife and gracious man was the Psalmist; but he was sensible that his attainments, both in knowledge and grace, were low in comparison to what they should be; and

therefore he earnestly longed to increase in both with the increase of God. We have,

1. What he prays for. [1.] To be taught God's way, and blest with spiritual understanding. [2.] To be inclined and disposed, yea, drawn with the cords of love, and made to go in the way of God's commandments; for unless the Lord were to draw our stubborn hearts, and to impart to us of his Spirit, we should neither be able nor willing to walk before him.

2. What he promises. *I will keep thy law*, in the strength of the grace thou dost minister, unto the end, constantly and perseveringly; and *with my whole heart*, cordially, sincerely, and universally; *for therein do I delight*. *Note*: When our duty becomes our delight, then our soul truly prospers.

3. What he prays against. [1.] *Covetousness*, one of the most rooted and most dangerous of all evils; the love of gold, and the love of God, being utterly incompatible, and no man capable of serving two masters. [2.] *Vanity*, the vain pomp and glory of the world; the honours, profits, and pleasures, so tempting and ensnaring to the soul. He desires that he may be not only kept from the love of them in his heart, but removed from beholding them: for they who would abstain from evil must turn away their eyes from the temptation; for by looking, concupiscence is kindled as with a fire. [3.] *Reproach*, that God would turn it away. He feared it, lest the cause of God should be dishonoured thereby. *For thy judgments are good*, and therefore it would be grievous to hear these good ways of the Lord blasphemed, as they too often are through the falls of professors.

4. What he trusts to; the faithful promises of God. *Quicken thou me in thy way*; while ten thousand objects would divert me from it, and manifold temptations retard my course, let thy grace hold up my goings, and enable me to persevere vigorously and steadily. *Stablish thy word*; enable me to rely confidently upon it, and make me see the blessed fulfilment of it in the strength, comfort, and salvation ministered unto thy servant, my most honoured title, higher than that of Israel's king; *who is devoted to thy fear and worship*, to serve thee with filial awe, or *which leads to thy fear*, and to the honouring of thee, this being the blessed effect of that word, that it makes us jealous of offending, and takes delight in honouring God.

5. What he longed for. Thou see'st my heart, and to thee I can appeal. *Behold*, and see, *I have longed after thy precepts*; that I may know them more distinctly, feel them graven upon my heart more deeply, and walk in the way of them more perfectly than I have ever yet done. *Quicken me in thy righteousness*, in thy righteous ways, according to thy faithful promises; and as thou hast given me to will, give me to do also of thy good pleasure.

6th, We have,

1. The prayer which he offered. [1.] *Let thy mercies come also unto me*; those mercies which flow from the covenant of grace, comprehending every blessing of pardon, grace, comfort, glory; *even thy salvation*, the fulness and perfection of it, according to thy word, which hath promised it, and therefore is the best plea to urge for the fulfilment of it. [2.] *Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth*. He desired ever to feed on its sweet contents; to be speaking of the things contained therein without fear or shame; and to have an answer ready from it for every one

one who should ask him a reason of the hope that was in him.

2. The graces which he exercised. [1.] *Faith.* *So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me; for I trust in thy word;* in the word of promise, and therefore he doubted not but he should be able to answer the cavils of those who suggested that there was no help for him in his God; and they, beholding his salvation so unlike what they looked for, would be confounded and ashamed. [2.] *Hope.* *I have hoped in thy judgments;* either to see thine arm made bare in vindicating my wrongs, and avenging me of my enemies; or, as expressive of his unshaken hope in God's word, amidst every discouragement. [3.] *Love.* *I have loved thy commandments,* not only looked on them as my duty, but approved them as excellent, and delighted in them in the inner man as my richest treasure. My soul, is such thy state?

3. The practice that he proposed to himself, and which, happy will it be for us if we follow. *So shall I keep thy law continually;* affected with a sense of divine mercies, and exercising faith, hope, and love, in the gracious promises of God, and persevering in this blessed path of holiness, shall obey with constancy and *for ever and ever.* *I will walk at liberty,* with readiness and delight, delivered from the bondage of corruption, and engaged in that blessed service which is perfect freedom. *Note;* No slavery like sin; no liberty so invaluable as deliverance from it. Or, *I will walk at large,* in all the extent of God's holy will; *for I seek thy precepts;* I have done so, and through grace continue so to do. Nor will he only himself walk thus, but desires to make all men know, and to invite all to partake of his mercies. *I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.* *Note;* (1.) If we are not a shame to our religion, we never need be ashamed of it. (2.) God's word is the best topic of conversation; and, though the world calls it cant to introduce that divine subject, the people of God must speak what they have known and believed, and what they delight in, and makes them happy. *I will delight myself in thy commandments,* as my chief joy, *and lift up my hands to them,* eager to climb the summit of perfection, embracing them with cordial affection, and praying for power and grace to walk more conformably thereunto: *and I will meditate in thy statutes,* that I may gain a more thorough acquaintance with them, and consider how I may best fulfil them. Behold, and imitate! *This is the way; walk ye in it!*

7th, The eyes of the servant are to the hand of his master.

1. He pleads, *Remember the word upon which thou hast caused me to hope:* not that God ever doth or can forget; but he will be inquired of by us, and is well-pleased to have his promises urged by us in prayer.

2. He professes the *comfort* he found in this word, even in his *afflictions.* David had a full cup of them, and every believer has his portion: but this word is a cordial for every fear, a balm for every wound. *For thy word hath quickened me:* it called me at first from death to life, and ever since it hath revived my fainting heart, and roused me up to fresh vigour, when my graces languished.

3. The scorn he met with was one of his troubles in which he found consolation from this word. *The proud have had me greatly in derision;* for no eminence of station, or purity of manners, can preserve us from the revilings of

men. They who live according to God's word, may expect the laugh of fools, and the ridicule of the scorers, who think contempt of godliness to be a mark of wit and wisdom. *Yet have I not declined from thy law:* none of these things moved him a step out of the way of duty: he knew the value of it too well to be laughed out of his religion; and indeed they can have very little love for Christ and his ways, who cannot bear for him the smile of contempt, or the scoff of folly. *I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord;* those executed on the proud, and the interpositions of his providence in behalf of his people; *and have comforted myself,* both in the consciousness of his simplicity and God's regard, which infinitely overpaid the world's scorn, and in the expectation that he who had formerly scattered the proud, and supported his people, would again appear for his help.

4. He expresses his dread on foreseeing the destruction of the ungodly, so terrible would it prove. Little as the wicked think of their danger, and trivial as they count their offences against God's law, a pious soul trembles for them, shocked at their impiety, grieved for the mischief they do, and with horror beholding the precipice of eternal ruin, to the brink of which they are so carelessly rushing.

5. In his lowest estate he would still rejoice. *Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.* This world is the strange land, through which, as pilgrims, the faithful travel, neither expecting nor seeking their rest below: they use it as their inn, and still hasten to their wished-for home; while with songs of praise they beguile the tedious hours, and from God's word encourage each other in the way.

6. By night, as well as day, God's law was the subject of his thoughts. *I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night:* when waking on his bed, his heart went up to heaven, and still maintained communion with God; *and have kept thy law,* in simplicity and godly sincerity. *This I had,* this comfort in the days of his pilgrimage, or this remembrance of God in the night, *because I kept thy precepts;* for in keeping them there is great reward. Or it may be rendered, *This was given unto me, that I have kept thy precepts;* it being wholly from God's grace that we are able to obey him, and to be acknowledged to his glory, not our own; for we have nothing that we have not received, and can render to him but of his own.

8th, We have,

1. Every good man's portion. *Thou art my portion, O Lord:* not wealth, not honours, not pleasures, not any sub-lunary good: no; these are husks, incapable of filling the boundless desires of his soul, which God alone with his love and favour can satisfy.

2. His purpose. *I have said, that I would keep thy words,* thy grace enabling me. All who have Christ to enjoy for their portion, cannot but yield themselves to him as their master to serve him.

3. His prayer. *I entreated thy favour with my whole heart;* or *thy face,* the light of thy countenance, which is better than life itself. *Be merciful unto me;* for every day we have need to cry for mercy. Blessed be his name, there is, through Jesus, mercy for the most miserable, and help for the desperate; and this *according to thy word,* the promises of God being ever the most prevalent plea.

4. His diligence to obey. *I thought on my ways,* reflected

on

on the past, considered the path of present duty, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies, from which he had swerved: he rectified his walk, and with full purpose of heart, through grace, resolved to make straight paths for his feet, and that instantly; for delay is dangerous, and our good intentions should not be suffered to cool, but be put into immediate execution. *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* *Note;* The sinner who for a moment refuses to comply with his convictions, and procrastinates, is in danger of being undone.

5. His complaint. *The bands of the wicked have robbed me:* united for his destruction, his enemies, who hated his good conversation, robbed him of his reputation by reproaches, and of his goods by violence, and would have robbed him of life itself; but in the midst of all he could say, *I have not forgotten thy law;* so as to be moved from the hope of its promises, or discouraged from obedience to its precepts. We may expect to share with the Psalmist in his sufferings; God grant we may be able to shew also our fidelity.

6. His thanksgiving. He not only prayed much, but praised too. *At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee.* He not only darted up a warm ejaculation, but shook off sleep, and even at midnight arose for the happy work of praise. How few have hearts so warm, as to leave their bed for such divine employment! and the matter of his song was God's righteous judgments; either those of his providence, executed on sinners, or manifested for his people's salvation; or those commands of his word, which are altogether righteous and true.

7. His company. He affected not the great, but the good; fought not the worldly wise, but the truly gracious. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.* He loved them for what he saw of God in them, delighted in their converse, joined with them in religious exercises, communicated his own experience, inquired into theirs, and, though much his inferiors, withheld not from them the hand of fellowship, or the heart of affection; grace, like the grave, in a measure making all distinctions void among those who are one in Christ Jesus.

8. He ascribes glory to God, and directs his prayer to him. *The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy, or goodness;* his providential kindness and care extending to all his works, and his special regard to the children of his grace. *Teach me thy statutes,* that in me another fresh instance may be given of thy mercy toward the sons of men. *Note;* Whatever will redound to God's glory, we may warmly urge as an argument for granting our petitions.

9th, We have,

1. David's grateful acknowledgment. *Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word.* His promises never fail; and they who trust them will own, that God doth all things well; not only above what we deserve, but exceeding all our desires.

2. His prayer and plea. *Teach me good judgment and knowledge, or, a good taste,* that, as the tongue distinguishes favours, so his heart might discern between good and evil, and approve the things that are excellent: *for I have believed thy commandments;* receiving them not as the word of man, but, as they are indeed, the word of God; and therefore he desired to have a deeper and more experimental acquaintance with them, which only God can teach.

3. He confesses his departure from God, and the blessing of affliction, which brought him back again. *Before I was afflicted, I went astray.* Ease, affluence, and prosperity, are strangely apt to steal away the heart from God, to make us forget that this is not our rest, and foolishly to attach our affections to the things that solicit our senses. This David found to his cost; but God visited him with the rod, kind scourge of paternal tenderness! How deeply are we indebted for it! However grievous for the time, we shall own it one of the best of blessings in disguise, when its effects are answered, and we can, by grace restored, say with the Psalmist, *But now have I kept thy word:* humbled into the dust, and brought back to the bosom of that Father of Mercies, from whom we had so greatly departed.

4. He ascribes glory to God. *Thou art good,* essentially in thyself, and the fountain of goodness to thy creatures; and *doest good* to all, even to the evil and unthankful; so boundless is the emanation of his kindness. *Teach me thy statutes,* that in this experience of thy goodness I may have fresh cause to praise thee.

5. He lodges a complaint against the proud, and professes his own integrity. *The proud have forged a lie against me;* and against a lying tongue the purest innocence is no protection. Let it not seem strange, if the grossest falsehoods are spoken of us, or the most malignant interpretations made of our words and actions; it was ever so of old, and the enmity of the world against God's servants still abideth. *But I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart;* not discouraged from the path of duty; not vindicating himself from their calumnies, so much as *living them down;* while the holiness and unblameableness of his conduct might be a confutation of their falsehood, who spake evil of his good conversation in Christ. *Their heart is as fat as grease,* wallowing in wealth and luxury, and by indulgence of every appetite stupifying their conscience, making even their bodies lethargic, and their senses blunted. *But I delight in thy law;* know no pleasure equal to communion with thee; and find greater satisfaction in denying the perverse cravings of concupiscence, as that law enjoins, than they in the lawless indulgence of them.

6. In the school of affliction he had learnt wisdom, (as before, v. 6, 7.) and the discipline he had there undergone was more than amply repaid in the benefits he received from an increased acquaintance with God, his word, his grace, his providences.

7. A high value did he set on God's word. *The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.* Vast possessions he enjoyed, immense riches he had acquired; but one page of God's book was better to him than these shining millions; one promise more valuable than the wealth of all the East. Faith, which realized to him an eternal world, and the glories there made him count every thing besides comparatively to be dung and loss. O that such a mind were in us also!

10th,

1. The Psalmist gives God the glory of his creation. *Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me;* the formation of our bodies in the womb being as much the work of divine power, as the making the first man out of the dust. *Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.* It is not so much our being, as our well-being, which is matter of praise. A creature apostate from God, as fallen man is become, might curse the day of his birth, unless by divine

vine grace he was renewed in the spirit of his mind, and his soul restored to the service of God here, and made capable of the enjoyment of him for ever.

2. Others would join his praises, when they beheld God's grace shewn to him. *They that fear thee*, the character of those who are God's dear children, *will be glad when they see me*; partaking in my prosperity, whether temporal or spiritual, as their own, and as members of the same body rejoicing with me, *because I have hoped in thy word*, which hath not failed; and this they see, and are encouraged to trust in the same promises.

3. He owns that, whatever afflictions he suffered, they were no more than he deserved; and that God therein had the most gracious designs towards him. *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right*; all the commands of thy word, and all the dispensations of thy providence, particularly the afflictive ones which he had undergone; *and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*, in consequence of his love and favour, and his covenant, wherein he had engaged to visit the iniquities of his people with the rod. *Note*: The darkest dispensations of Providence are but the frowns of paternal tenderness toward those who love him; and in all such cases he corrects because he loves.

4. He prays for a fresh discovery of God's merciful kindness, as a comfort to him in every affliction; a sense of this would make every burden light: and he pleads the word of truth as an argument for being heard and answered. *Yea, he redoubles his prayer; Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live*: only for mercy can a sinner plead; only on mercy can his hope be stayed; and there is mercy, tender mercy, abounding mercy with God, for all who seek it in Jesus Christ. *For thy law is my delight, or delights*, what I approve as most excellent; and fain would I exercise myself in it day and night.

5. He prays for confusion or shame on his enemies, and for the company of his friends. [1.] *For confusion or shame on his enemies*. Vile was their character; *proud and arrogant, insolent and overbearing. They dealt perversely with me*; by lies sought to blacken his character, or by their snares to move him from his steadfastness: and this *without a cause*. It was unprovoked malice, and left them inexcusable in their iniquity. Such enemies may every pious soul expect to meet with; *but they will be disappointed of their ends, and covered with shame present and eternal*; while, for himself unmoved, he can say, *I will meditate in thy precepts*; no more diverted by their clamour and perverseness from his contemplations, than by the whistling of the winds. [2.] *For the company of his friends*. Their character is excellent; *they fear thee*, with filial reverential fear of his word and judgments, and *have known thy testimonies*, wise unto salvation; their understandings clear in the knowledge of the truth, and their hearts sound in the practice of it; and therefore he cannot but wish that they would *turn unto him*.

6. He prays, *Let my heart be sound, or sincere, in thy statutes*; in obedience to God's commands, and in observance of the instituted ordinances of his worship; *that I be not ashamed*; for when we are unfaithful we are ashamed to look men in the face, ashamed to appear before God, and shocked at ourselves; while conscious simplicity enables us to approach a throne of grace boldly, and our faces know no shame.

11th, We have,

1. The Psalmist's distress, and recourse to God. *My soul fainteth for thy salvation*, when ready to sink under the pressure of afflictions, or looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, so earnestly longed for by every pious soul; *but I hope in thy word*, to be delivered from all my threatening dangers, and to see the promise accomplished in the fulness of time. *Mine eyes fail for thy word*, weary with straining, to descry the approach of the Incarnate Word, or as ready to give up the prospect of relief, *saying, When wilt thou comfort me?* thus discouraged, tempted, and distressed, he was; *for I am become like a bottle in the smoke*, which, being made of the skins of beasts, grew shrivelled; and so emaciated and wrinkled was his once ruddy visage grown, worn down with the anguish and sorrow which preyed upon him within; *yet, notwithstanding all he suffered, I do not forget thy statutes*; but though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee. *Note*: (1.) A sickly body, and a mind sorely harassed with temptations and afflictions, are often the lot of God's dearest children. (2.) We are apt to count every moment of trial long, and to be impatient of relief; but if we wait for it, we shall see the salvation of God. (3.) The fairest countenance, by disease, becomes quickly haggard and wrinkled: what folly to set a high value on so fading and uncertain a possession!

2. He pleads with God the length of his trials, the wickedness of his enemies, and his own fidelity, as arguments for present help, and for justice to be done him on his persecutors. *How many are the days of thy servant?* few, very few, and must they be all spent in the furnace of affliction? Lord, shorten the hour of temptation: *when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?* the judgment of the sinner is near, is terrible; yet a moment, and the righteous will see it executed upon their persecutors: and this according to the highest equity, *for the proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law*, see Exod. xxi. 33, 34. They pursued him as if he had been a wild beast, and with the most mischievous design sought to entrap him. *All thy commandments are faithful*; trusting thereon, I fear not their malice; *they persecute me wrongfully*, without the least provocation, with inveterate hatred, and unrelenting cruelty; and I have no power to resist them. *Help thou me!* all other help is vain, all other hope I disclaim, on thy everlasting arms I hang; Lord, save; or I perish. *They had almost consumed me upon earth*, so near they brought him to the brink of the grave; *but I forsok not thy precepts*; till death, determined never to quit my hold, and in death to make them my support. *Note*: (1.) Steady adherence to God is our grand security; from his hands none can pluck the faithful. (2.) Terrible will be the end of the ungodly, when God, the judge of all, arises to execute vengeance.

3. He prays for quickening grace. *Quicken me after thy loving-kindness*, let me experience the enlivening influence of thy grace, and that shall strengthen me under all my difficulties; *so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth*; though in myself weaker than the bruised reed, yet able to do all things, thou strengthening me. *Note*: All is of grace: when God quickens our souls for the performance of duty, as he does the soul of every believer, it is an act of unmerited favour.

12th, We have,

1. The glory of God's word and works. *For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven, or, thou art for ever, O*

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Lord: from everlasting to everlasting, the same unchangeable Jehovah, and *thy word is settled, or is firm in heaven*, the decrees of it immutable, and the execution of them sure. *Thy faithfulness is unto all generations*, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and every faithful believer to the latest ages shall experience it to be so, to his everlasting joy. *Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth*, supported and preserved by the hand that formed it; *they continue this day*, the heavens and the earth, with all the vast orbs that roll in the immensity of space, according to thine ordinances; observing with exactest regularity the track marked out for them, and running with uninterrupted and abiding perseverance their appointed course: *for all are thy servants*, the creatures of thy hands, and obedient to thy will. *Note*; Men and devils are the only rebels in the whole creation of God.

2. The delight which the Psalmist took in God's law, and the support that he derived from it. *Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction*; the storm ran high, he was ready to despair of life, and in his spirit dejected; but in God's word a well of living waters sprung up; this revived him when fainting, strengthened him when weak, comforted him when afflicted; and may not every believer say this by experience? but for the word of gospel-grace he had sunk under his trials, and perished in despair. Abundant reason has he therefore to say, *I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me*; not the precepts of the law, for they are a ministration of death; but the powerful word of the gospel, which is a favour of life unto life, through the ministration of the Spirit.

3. He pleads the interest that God had in him, as a reason why he should shew him his salvation. *I am thine, thine by creation, thine by redemption, thine by adoption and grace, thine by choice, wholly thine, only thine. Save me from every evil of sin, or suffering; to which from the malice of earth or hell he might be exposed; for I have sought thy precepts, desired to know them, delighted to obey them, and therein approved my fidelity to thee.*

4. He complains of the wicked. *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me*; laid snares to entangle him, waited for his halting, and purposed to kill the body; or, more terrible, by seducing him into sin, to ruin his soul; *but I will consider thy testimonies, steadfast in adhering to them, notwithstanding all opposition, and by them preserved from all the snares of the ungodly.*

5. He mentions his own observations confirming the excellence of God's law. *I have seen an end of all perfection*, all the greatness, glory, and wisdom of the world is limited, transitory, and passing away, and all the perfection that man can arrive at is infinitely short of the purity of God's law; *but thy commandment is exceeding broad*, beyond what created understanding ever fathomed, and proportionate and adequate to which, no works and righteousness merely human were ever found: only by Jesus Christ was it ever fully observed in the perfection of innocence.

13th, David had often spoken of his delight in God's word, and now in a rapture breaks forth, *O how love I thy law*, more than I am able to express; so rich are the promises contained in it, so excellent the rules prescribed by it: *it is my meditation all the day*; and nothing could be a stronger proof how greatly he delighted in it, than this. Several

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reasons he gives why he was bound thus to love and meditate in God's law.

1. Because of the wisdom that he had thereby attained. God had taught him, and no marvel his proficiency was great; he was *wiser than his enemies*, enabled to defeat their stratagems, and countermine their crafty designs. *He had more understanding than all his teachers*, either those who sat in Moses' seat, but were, as the Scribes and Pharisees in our Lord's day, very defectively versed in those scriptures which they professed to teach; or those who had in youth instructed him, whose attainments he had far outstripped. Nay, he understood more *than the ancients*, either the sages of his own day, or those preceding, and all this through God's commandments being *ever with him*; he consulted them in every circumstance, on every emergence; *his meditation on them was sweet and frequent*, and his adherence to them constant and sincere. *Note*; (1.) To practise what we know, is the speediest way to the highest attainments of spiritual wisdom. (2.) The written word of God contains more treasures of knowledge and a surer guide to glory, than all the volumes of philosophers, the decrees of councils, or the decisions of the fathers: these are fallible, and sometimes essentially erroneous; that is the voice of truth itself.

2. Because God's precepts made him refrain from and hate every evil way. The paths of sin are strewn with roses, and tempt us to turn aside, and taste those specious delights; but God's word discovers the delusion; the lurking serpent is pointed out, and the thorn which pierces at every step; and we are warned to escape from the ways of the destroyer.

3. Because by them he was kept steady in the path of duty. *I have not departed from thy judgments*, from the doctrines of truth, the ordinances of worship, or obedience to the commands; *for thou hast taught me*, and none but God can teach effectually, so as to make wise unto salvation.

4. Because of the comfort that he found in God's word. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth*, such consolation he drew from those breasts of gospel-grace, and every promise was as the flowers of spring, which afford sweetness to the industrious bee. And if we have but the Psalmist's spirit, we shall find the same delight in God's word, and confirm his experience by our own.

14th, We have,

1. The use of God's word. It is *a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*. The law discovers the path of duty, points out the perfection of righteousness which God requires, convinces us of sin, and opens the corruption and deceitfulness of our hearts. The gospel holds forth Jesus, the son of righteousness; reveals the grace, mercy, and love of God manifested to sinners in their Redeemer; points to him the way, the truth, and the life; and shews us how by faith to walk in him, so as to reach at last the eternal kingdom.

2. David's solemn dedication of himself to God's service. *I have sworn, and I will perform it*, through divine grace, *that I will keep thy righteous judgments*; the promises, vows, and resolutions, indeed, made in our own strength, are vain and delusive; but the engagements that we enter into, drawn by the cords of love, supported by the Lord's power,

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and under a sense of our deep obligations, we shall be enabled to perform.

3. His afflicted state, and recourse to God therein. *I am afflicted very much*, either in body, under disease; in his circumstances, through oppression; or in his soul, under temptation: *quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word*, without the supports of which, I must have perished in my trouble.

4. His prayer for the acceptance of his services, and for direction in the way. *Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offerings of my mouth, O Lord*; not the offerings of slain beasts, but the more pleasing oblations of the calves of the lips, the spiritual sacrifices of a grateful heart; *and teach me thy judgments*, for without divine teaching we can offer no acceptable service.

5. The danger to which he was exposed, and the practice that he persevered in. *My soul is continually in my hand*, in jeopardy every hour; *for the wicked have laid a snare for me*, crafty, as well as powerful, they use every method to destroy me: *yet do I not forget thy law, nor err from thy precepts*; neither intimidated out of his professions, nor diverted from the path of duty, nor through anxious care for his safety forgetful of God's law; nor, by any sinful contrivances to extricate himself from his difficulties, erring from the way of truth. *Note*; (1.) Persecution and suffering are more or less the lot of Christians in general in this wicked world. (2.) Patient perseverance will finally be crowned with success.

6. He professes his deliberate choice of God's word, as his abiding portion and joy. *Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever*, for the most invaluable possessions are those which are held by promise from God; *they are the present rejoicing of my heart*, affording a satisfaction infinitely beyond what all the things on earth can give, and not ceasing with our present transitory life, but abiding with the faithful to the days of eternity. *I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end*; not that it was of himself, but of divine grace, that he was thus disposed and enabled; and he trusted, that he who had begun would perfect what was lacking, and strengthen him to persevere even to the end.

15th, We have,

1. David's hatred of sin and love of God's law. He hated the very thoughts of evil. God, who sees them afar off, abhors them; and, if we find them rise within us, we must hate them too, and labour to smother them in the birth, before they are perfected in the act, or even quickened into desire. *Note*; If we watch not over our thoughts, we shall not long walk in the ways of God.

2. He professes his dependance on God. *Thou art my hiding-place*, whither I flee when pursued by the malice of earth or hell, and find a sure retreat; *and my shield*, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and cover my head in the day of battle. *I hope in thy word*, and, having this anchor of my soul sure and steadfast, am enabled to ride out every storm.

3. He bids the evil doers depart, resolute to reject their enticements, and adhere to the commandments of his God. *Note*; (1.) It requires great courage to deny the solicitations of sinners. (2.) They who do not shun the company of evil doers, will not long keep from their ways. (3.)

They who can truly say *my God*, cannot but say also, "I will keep thy commandments."

4. He prays for support from God. He felt his own weakness; he knew that, left to himself, he could not but fall, and therefore cries, *Uphold me*: and again, *hold thou me up*, as one sinking, unless the everlasting arms were under him: he grounds his prayer upon the promise, *according unto thy word*, and confidently trusts that thus he *shall be safe*, shall live the life of grace amid manifold temptations, and *not be ashamed of his hope*, so as to be disappointed in time or eternity; and, thus strengthened, he promises for himself, *I will have respect unto thy statutes continually*, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, to persevere in the path of duty, till he should enter into the rest of glory. Lord, evermore thus hold thou up my soul!

5. He foresees and trembles at the ruin coming on the ungodly. Their character is evil: they *err from thy statutes*, desire not the knowledge of the truth, and wilfully turn aside. *Their deceit is falsehood*, they are hypocritical in their professions to God and man: they are the *wicked of the earth*; in their tempers and practices earthly, sensual, devilish; and their end will be according to their works. God will *tread them down* in his wrath, and trample them in his fury; *will put them away like dross*, proved vile and refuse, separated from destruction, and cast into the fiery furnace of everlasting burnings: such judgments on the ungodly afflicted the Psalmist's heart in a double respect, as it should ours also. [1.] To fear before this holy God, trembling at the terrible situation of the ungodly, and careful to avoid every occasion that would kindle this wrath, which who for a moment can abide? [2.] To love God's testimonies the better; for in them only is the way of life, and in the path-way thereof there is no death.

16th, The Psalmist,

1. Appeals to God for his integrity, and begs him to be his protector from wrong. *I have done judgment and justice*, whether in his private capacity acting ever uprightly, or as the king of Israel, ministering true judgment unto the people. *Leave me not to mine oppressors*, for the most wicked and the most powerful can go not one step further to hurt us, than God permits. *Be surety for thy servant for good*, espouse my quarrel, vindicate my innocence against my accusers, and rescue me out of their hands; *let not the proud oppress me*. *Note*; The more we are conscious of our own weakness, and fly to God for help, the surer shall we stand.

2. He counts it long ere help arrives. *Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness*, for the fulfilment of the promise which assured him of salvation; it now seemed so long deferred, that he was ready to despair: and this hath been too often the infirmity of righteous men.

3. He prays for divine teaching. *Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy*, for that is the only thing upon which we can rest our hopes; *and teach me thy statutes*, direct me in my doubts, support me under my discouragements. *I am thy servant*, and desire to approve my fidelity, if I knew the way; therefore *give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies*, and obey them.

4. He begs that God would arise for his own glory. *It is time for thee, Lord, to work*, to stop the torrent of ungodliness,

liness, and silence the blasphemies of the profane: *for they have made void thy law*, impiously casting off the cords, and bidding defiance to the Almighty; or proudly setting up a self-righteousness of their own. *Note*; They who rely on their own works for justification, as much make void the law, as those who daringly cast off every restraint, and indulge every lawless appetite.

5. He professes his love to God's law, and proves it in the most effectual manner—no gold so precious in his eyes. *All God's precepts*, concerning *all things*, he approved as just and good; the most difficult to be obeyed without hesitation, and none so little as to be forgotten or slighted. And he *hated every false way*, whether false doctrine, false worship, or false practices, he utterly abhorred them. Would to God our souls gave each day such proofs of the sincerity of our love!

17th, The Psalmist,

1. Expresses his admiration of God's testimonies, and his purpose to observe them. *They are wonderful*, contain astonishing discoveries of invisible things, of the mystery of God and of Christ, of the covenant of grace, of the way of godliness, and of the joys and miseries of the eternal world: *therefore doth my soul keep them*, locked up in my heart as the richest treasure, and with unreserved devotedness obeyed. *Note*; It is not commending God's word, but doing the work that it enjoins, which can shew our real esteem for it.

2. The benefit of God's word. *The entrance of thy words giveth light*: the first three chapters of the Bible teach us more of God's works, and man's true condition, what he was, and what he is, than all the books in the world; and when by the Spirit of God our understandings are enlightened, we immediately, on the very entrance of divine light, know more of God's grace and love than all mere human teaching ever could inform us. *It giveth understanding unto the simple*, makes even fools in the eyes of men wise unto salvation; and those who come to it with simplicity, and a child-like Spirit, find from every perusal increasing understanding in the things of God.

3. Like one gasping for breath, or as a person famished with hunger, the Psalmist could say, *I opened my mouth and panted*; *for I longed for thy commandments*, so intense were his desires, so fervent the breathings of his soul after God and his holy ways, and so eagerly he longed for the courts of his house, and the ordinances of his worship. Have we any thing of this sacred fervour?

4. He cries for mercy. *Look upon me*, not as I am of myself, the greatest of sinners, but in Jesus, my Saviour, and be merciful unto me; forgive my transgressions, and let me not meet the face of an angry, but a reconciled and pardoning God, *as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name*; such looks of kind regard, such favours and mercies bestow upon me, for I am of that number, and hope to share with them in their blessedness. *Note*; If we love God in truth, we can ask for nothing that is good for us, which a God of love will not bestow.

5. He prays for direction and preservation. 1. Direction; *order my steps in thy word*; for we shall be able to take no step aright, unless God teach us by his Spirit, and guide us by his grace. 2. Preservation; *Let not any iniquity*, not the least known and allowed sin, *have dominion over me*, that I should obey it in the lusts thereof. *Note*; Nothing is so terrible in the eye of an awakened conscience, as to be

brought again under the bondage of corruption and the power of sin.

6. He begs deliverance from his oppressors. *Deliver me from the oppression of man*, whose power he feared and whose malice he had experienced: *so will I keep thy precepts* with greater freedom and liberty, being rescued out of the hands of his oppressors.

7. He seeks the light of God's countenance to cheer him. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant*; with thy bright beams of love, make me to feel their enlivening influence, and to rejoice in the assurance of thy favour: *and teach me thy statutes*, that I may know them, and do them, and have joy in beholding the powerful effects of thy grace therein manifested. *Note*; (1.) If God smiles, it is of no consequence who frowns upon us. (2.) When we are found in the path of duty, God will meet us with the visits of his love.

8. He testifies his deep concern for the dishonour done to God, and the ruin that men bring on themselves by their iniquities. It was not a small measure of grief that oppressed him; no: *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes*: *because they keep not thy law*. *Note*; Every good man is a mourner in Zion; not only for his own sins, but he weeps over those that never drop a tear for themselves.

18th, The Psalmist,

1. Gives glory to God. *Righteous art thou, O Lord*, essentially so in himself, and in all the dispensations of his providence and grace; *and upright are thy judgments*, the afflictive visitations that he sends on his people, or the vengeance he executes on his enemies, all which are done with the highest equity. *Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded, are righteous and very faithful*, his precepts flowing from the rectitude of his nature, most fit for him to enjoin, and for us to obey; and all his promises are *yea* and *amen* in Christ Jesus to every faithful soul.

2. Great was his zeal for God. *My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy word*; he could not be an unconcerned spectator, and calmly behold God's authority disregarded, his word despised. That they were his enemies, he was least concerned about; that they were God's enemies, he could not bear, and therefore so zealously interested himself, that it preyed upon his spirits, and emaciated his body. *Note*; It is a good thing to be ever zealously affected in a good cause.

3. He highly commends God's word. *Thy word is very pure*, without any human mixture, holy men of old delivering it as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and its tendency being to promote purity in heart and life: *therefore thy servant loveth it*.

4. He complains. *I am small and despised*, little in my own eyes, and suffering much contempt and scorn from men, as will ever be more or less the portion of the righteous and zealous here below: *yet do not I forget thy precepts*, nothing moved him from his steadfast adherence to God's word and ways.

5. He exalts God's righteousness and truth. *Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness*; God is the same in all his glorious perfections for ever and ever; and in all his works and word he will eternally appear to be righteous; and that *righteousness* of his Son, manifested even to the death of the cross, which he hath provided for the justification of the sinner, is to everlasting ages the same; the

hope of the faithful in time, and the sole meritorious cause of their glorification to all eternity. *And thy law is the truth; like himself, who is the God of truth, one jot or tittle of whose word can never fail, until the whole be fulfilled.*

6. In his trouble God's word comforted him. *Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me; outward afflictions and inward grief seemed to seize him as their prey, and gracious souls have offered their portion of this bitter cup: yet thy commandments are my delights, delights which can be enjoyed in the midst of sorrows, and which, as the world cannot bestow them, neither can it take them away from the faithful soul.*

7. He acknowledges, as before, the everlasting righteousness of God's testimonies; and adds thereto his fervent prayer; *give me understanding, and I shall live; they who know the Lord Jesus, and are acquainted with his eternal truths, and perseveringly cleave to him, live to and for God here, and will shortly live with him for ever in glory. For this is eternal life, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

10th, We have,

1. David's prayer and purpose. His prayer was earnest and importunate, and the object was salvation from the guilt, the power, the punishment of sin, and from the oppression, malice, and snares of his enemies: and, enabled in the strength of God, he resolves to keep his statutes and testimonies. *Note; (1.)* Cold prayers only beg denials; a few fervent words are better than a volume of mere lip-labour. *(2.)* We may be assured that our prayers are heard and answered, when our hearts are quickened to greater diligence in walking before God.

2. Early and late his mind was occupied in God's word. Before the dawn of day he was upon his knees; and in the night, awake upon his bed, his heart went up to God, and his word was the pleasing subject of his meditations, and the reviving hope of his soul. *Note; (1.)* A sleepy body is usually the proof of a sleepy soul; vigorous christians rise early, and waking redeem those hours which others dose away in useless sloth. *(2.)* When we begin the morning with God, we shall be enabled to see him at our right hand all the day long. *(3.)* The more we read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest God's word, the more confirmed will be our faith, and the more enlivened our hope.

3. He begs for quickening grace. *Hear my voice according to thy loving-kindness, for not our deserts, but his grace can alone embolden our requests. O Lord, quicken me according to thy judgment, revive my soul from its decays, its deadness and lifelessness, and according to thy promises restore me to a more enlivened temper of mind. Note; It is a heavy burden to a believer, when he perceives his heart heavy and backward in the ways of God; and he cries aloud for quickening grace.*

4. In his danger the Psalmist flies to God, and from his nearness to him, and from the fidelity of his counsels, draws consolation to his soul. *They draw nigh that follow after mischief, their restless hearts are ever bent on evil, and they pressed hard upon him, ready to destroy him; restrained by no fear of God, they are far from thy law, casting off all obedience to it, and careless about its threatenings: but, however sore thrust at, the Psalmist had a friend near, and*

able to help him. *Thou art near, O Lord, ever at my right hand to save me, and all thy commandments are truth; the fulfilment of God's word his enemies sought in vain to defeat, for it is inviolably true. Concerning, or from thy testimonies, I have known of old, that thou hast founded them for ever; from earliest youth acquainted with the scripture, he knew that the truths were eternal, of perpetual obligation, and everlasting endurance; not one tittle can fail until the whole be fulfilled. Note; (1.)* We may meet with much enmity in the world, and God may permit the danger to be very threatening; but it is to drive us closer to his blessed self, and engage our dependance more entirely upon him. *(2.)* In every trial he is near, and they who perseveringly trust him shall find his promises for ever sure: he never hath, never will, never can disappoint the hopes of the faithful soul, for he cannot deny himself.

20th, These verses contain,

1. The Psalmist's cry for help from God in his afflictions, particularly against the malice of his persecutors. *Consider mine affliction, how great it is, and how weak I am to stand under it, and deliver me, for thou art able to save to the uttermost; and on thee I depend, for I do not forget thy law, neither moved by my troubles to forsake it, nor unmindful of the strength promised therein for my support. Plead my cause, as the avenger of my wrongs, and the advocate of injured innocence, and deliver me; let my accusers be put to shame, and quicken me with fresh strength and courage, to arise to walk before thee, according to thy word, my hope, and never failing refuge. Many are my persecutors; and mine enemies thrust fore at me that I may fall, yet do I not decline from thy testimonies, not ashamed to make public profession of the religion which exposes me to their malice, nor diverted from the path of duty by their opposition. Note; (1.)* In every affliction it is an inestimable privilege, that we have a God to go to, in whose bosom we may pour out our complaints, with assurance of a gracious hearing and help. *(2.)* All who will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution: the Lord enable us neither to be ashamed nor afraid! *(3.)* However for a while the enemies of Christ and his people may prevail, he will arise shortly to plead his own cause, and render tribulation to those that trouble us.

2. He describes the character, and declares the hopeless state, of the ungodly. *Salvation is far from the wicked, they have no part or lot in the matter, continuing obstinately impenitent; Christ, respecting them, hath died in vain; and, however they may flatter themselves with hopes of heaven, they will be terribly undeceived when they come to lift up their eyes in torment; for they seek not thy statutes, they neither know nor desire to know them, but wilfully and obstinately persevere and perish in their iniquities. Note; The day will come, when the salvation which sinners despised shall indeed be far from them, and the great gulph fixed for ever and ever.*

3. He admires the riches of God's grace. *Great are thy tender mercies, temporal mercies, great and numberless, but spiritual mercies in Christ still infinitely surpassing, and more inestimably great and glorious: pardon, grace, eternal life, flowing from boundless love and unmerited favour: quicken me according to thy judgments, and add this to all thy other mercies. Note; The more we contemplate the ten-*

der

der mercies of our God, the more shall we be overwhelmed with wonder, love, and praise.

4. He declares the pain that he felt for sinners. *I beheld the transgressors* with a mixture of pity and indignation, and *was grieved* for them, that they were so insensible of their baseness, hardened against fear, careless about the miseries they were bringing upon themselves; and for the dishonour done to God by their rebellious conduct, *because they kept not thy word*: a gracious heart thus bleeds for human misery; a zealous heart cannot, unmoved, look round on a world lying in wickedness. Blessed be God! the day is near when all this cause of grief and pain shall end.

5. Conscious of the simplicity of his heart, the Psalmist looks up to God. *Consider how I love thy precepts*, how ardently; and therefore could not but grieve to see them violated: *quicken me, O Lord, according to thy loving-kindness*, that I may be enabled to prove my love to them, by the enlivened diligence used in observing them. *Note*: The keeping of God's commandments is the only solid proof of loving them.

6. He encourages his heart in the faithfulness of God in his word. From the first promise given to Adam, one tittle hath not failed of being accomplished; and to eternity all who perseveringly trust in him shall find the word of promise sure, and those who impenitently provoke him shall feel his judgments inexorable and eternal.

21st, The Psalmist,

1. Complains to God. *Princes have persecuted me without a cause*, the princes of Israel under Saul and Absalom, or of the Philistines at the court of Achish. Thus was the Son of David also persecuted by the Jewish rulers; and thus have his people formerly been, and to this hour are, in many countries, oppressed by the great men of the world; and the power of magistracy often employed to crush or trouble them, though they are the quiet of the land: *but my heart standeth in awe of thy word*, unmoved with their persecution, and taught alone to fear him, who, when he hath killed, can cast both soul and body into hell.

2. He professes his delight in God's word, *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil*; in this field are hid the inestimable treasures of grace, pardon, peace, righteousness, salvation; and he who findeth these hath indeed cause for joy. This was his happy case, and therefore he could say, *Seven times a day do I praise thee*, frequently, every day, not only on his knees, but at his meals, in his business, *because of thy righteous judgments*, the doctrines and precepts of his word, the providential mercies vouchsafed to his people, and the punishment executed on his foes, all which afforded matter for praise and joy. *Note*: If we do not want a heart, we never need want matter for God's praises.

3. He declares his detestation of *lying or falsehood*, either in his ordinary conversation, his dealings in the world, or his professions before God; or he hated every thing contrary to the truth and word of God, whether false doctrine, worship, or ways. *Note*: There is but one thing which we are permitted to hate, and that is sin, and there we need fear excess.

4. He professes his love to God's law. *Thy law do I love*, in opposition to all doctrines of lies, and practices of

falsehood; and great is the blessedness thence accruing, for *great peace have they which love thy law*, peace with God, peace in their conscience, peace which the world can neither give nor take away; great peace, passing all understanding: *and nothing shall offend them*; the unfaithfulness of others shall not stagger them; and, as they would not willingly offend themselves, neither are they captious to take offence against their brethren, or rigid censurers of their conduct.

5. He professes his hope in God's salvation; a good hope, through grace, which had the most blessed influence, engaging him to purify himself as he is pure. *Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation*, temporal, spiritual, eternal, and this hope hath been, and continues to be, the anchor of my soul, and enables me to ride out every storm; *and done thy commandments*, with simplicity and godly sincerity. *Note*: Christian hope will ever produce holy walking.

6. He appeals to God for his simplicity. *My soul hath kept thy testimonies*, embraced the doctrines, obeyed the precepts, and *I love them exceedingly*, out of a pure heart, fervently. *I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies*, and this I should not dare to repeat, if conscious of known guilt in sentiment or practice: *for all my ways are before thee*, thine eye is upon me, thou knowest the secrets of my heart, thou knowest that I love thee, and delight and desire to please thee in all things. O that there were such a heart in us! O that with confidence we could thus approach unto God in Christ!

22d, We have,

1. The Psalmist's prayer. *Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord*, a poor supplicant at the footstool of thy grace, unworthy of notice, yet perishing without thy kind regard: *give me understanding according to thy word*, to know thy will, that I may obey it. *Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word of promise*, which emboldened his prayer, and which he pleaded as the ground of his confidence in God, and the argument for present help, that God's faithfulness might be magnified. *Note*: What we ask according to God's word, believing, we shall receive.

2. His resolution to render his grateful returns for God's mercies. *My lips shall utter praise*, as a copious stream gushing from a heart overflowing with gratitude, *when thou hast taught me thy statutes*, which will, the more I know them, enlarge my soul with love, and fill my lips with thanksgiving. *My tongue shall speak of thy word*, commending from experience its excellence to others, and eager to spread the knowledge of it on every side; *for all thy commandments are righteousness*, perfectly righteous in themselves, and the evangelical righteousness of those who observe them in love through the only meritorious righteousness of Jesus Christ, who hath fulfilled the law for us, and is the end thereof for righteousness to every believer.

3. He pleads for help from God. *Let thine hand help me* against my enemies of every kind, within and without; for I cannot help myself, and all human help is vain. *Note*: When we are in our own eyes most weak and helpless, God's strength will be made perfect in our weakness.

4. He declares what hath been his choice, his hope, and joy. *I have chosen thy precepts*, as my heritage for ever, approve them as most excellent, and wish to conform to them without reserve. *I have longed for thy salvation*, for temporal

P S A L. CXX.

David prayeth against Doeg, and reproveth his tongue. He complaineth of his necessary conversation with the wicked.

A Song of Degrees.

IN my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.

3 What shall be given unto thee? or what

shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.

5 Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.

6 My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.

7 I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.

temporal deliverance from his foes, for the coming of the expected Messiah, who should bring eternal redemption to his faithful people, for the salvation of body and soul in the day of final recompense: *and thy law is my delight*; he took the right way, and therefore might well hope for a blessed issue. The Lord Christ will be assuredly the author of salvation to all that obey him.

5. He prays that he may live for God's glory. *Let my soul live*, my natural life be prolonged, or my spirit enlivened by divine grace, and put in tune for God's present and everlasting praises, *and it shall praise thee*; this shall be my constant employment: *and let thy judgments help me*, teach me matter for my songs, and direct me in the acceptable manner. *Note*; Life is only desirable to a good man, that he may employ it in God's praise and service.

6. He concludes with an humbling confession, a gracious prayer, and holy profession. *I have gone astray like a lost sheep*, an animal stupid and foolish, the easiest to err, the last to find his way back again; such is the fit emblem of the sinner's folly, so easily turned aside, so unable to return to the God from whom he hath departed. May we not well adopt the Psalmist's acknowledgment, with grief and shame lament our sad departures from the God of our mercies, and cry with him, *seek thy servant*; for he is not hasty to cast us away, but, like a tender shepherd, seeks that which was lost, bringing back into the way the returning prodigal, and restoring him again to the joys of his salvation, *for I do not forget thy commandments*. However for a moment he seemed to be moved from his steadfastness, through the power of his enemies, or the deceitfulness of sin; he still remembered God's good ways, approved of them, and desired to walk in them as the only ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace.

P S A L. CXX.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת *Sbiir hammangaloth.* A song of degrees] Or ascent: It is very uncertain why this title is prefixed to this and the following psalms. The more general opinion seems to be that of those who conjecture that they were so called, because, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, they were sung by the Levites as they went up the stairs or steps of the temple. See Ezek. xl. Others, however, think that this title refers to some gradual rise or exaltation of the voice in singing: Others render the words by "A song of excellencies;" supposing the words to express the excellence of the composition; and Mr. Fenwick, agreeably to his plan, understands them to be, "Songs for ascending or aspiring souls."

The reader will find a dissertation on the subject prefixed by Calmet to his commentary on this psalm. As far as one may guess from the general import of the psalms which have this title, says Mr. Mudge, they mean psalms sung upon the occasion of the Jews coming up from the country, as they did three times a year, to pay their devotions at Jerusalem. Thus the reader sees what different sentiments there are upon the subject; and the truth of the matter seems to be, that, as neither the author nor the occasion of these psalms can be determinately fixed, so it is impossible to say what is the exact meaning of the title. The English argument asserts, that the psalm is a prayer of David against Doeg, when his calamities reduced him to the necessity of taking refuge in the country of the Arabians, expressed in the fifth verse by the *tents of Kedar*. The Syriac title intimates, that it was a prayer used by the Jews during their captivity in Babylon. Both these opinions may be reconciled, by supposing that, though the psalm was originally composed by David on account of the calumnies of Doeg, yet it was so well adapted to the situation of the captive Jews, that they made use of it as descriptive of the distress which they groaned under in Babylon.

Ver. 4. Sharp arrows of the mighty] *Sharp arrows of the mighty* [*shot*] from coals of juniper. Hiller. Hierophut. 255. Hamm. "All the reward thou shalt meet with shall be a "swift vengeance from the Almighty." This is metaphorically represented by *sharp arrows*, and *burning coals of juniper*; the wood of which tree is supposed to burn more intensely than any other.

Ver. 5. That I sojourn in Mesech, &c.] *Woe is me that my sojourning is so long protracted, while I dwell in the tents of Kedar!* Houb. and many other commentators. On the other hand, many learned men suppose ours to be the proper rendering: They observe that *Mesech*, in the Chaldee and Syriac language, signifies a *skin*, and is supposed to denote a place in Arabia; so called from the skins with which the Arabians covered their tents. The barbarous people, who lived in that part of the country, were termed *Scenitzæ*, because they continued in tents without houses. *Kedar* is the name of another place or territory in that part of Arabia; so called from Kedar, the son of Ishmael, (Gen. xxv. 13.) whose posterity dwelt in that country. This may either be understood literally of David, or metaphorically, of dwelling among people as much averse to peace as the wild Arabs, who live a life of rapine and plunder.

P S A L. CXXI.

The great safety of the godly, who put their trust in God's protection.

A Song of Degrees.

I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.

6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore.

REFLECTIONS.—David was now an exile from his native country, flying from the malice of his enemies.

1. He complains of his sad estate, which in prayer he spreads before God. *In my distress I cried unto the Lord; driven from his home, a stranger in a strange land; and, as his prayer imports, maligned, reproached, belied, betrayed. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue; not his own, for he abhorred the sin, but from others, such as Doeg's and Saul's courtiers', who by flattery, falsehood, and misrepresentation, sought his ruin. Thus was the innocent Lamb of God persecuted and reviled; and false witnesses laid to his charge things which he knew not of. Let it not seem a strange thing to us, if our characters, for his name's sake, suffer under the falsest and most cruel aspersions; the day of detection for lying lips will come.*

2. He acknowledges God's kind attention to his prayer. *He heard me, and disappointed the malice of his enemies; with him we may ever contentedly leave our case.*

3. He foresees the miserable end of these men. *What shall be given unto thee, or what will it give unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?* Did sinners for a moment consider the end of their ways, terrors would take hold of them; for their decreed portion is, *Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper; the wrath of an Almighty God, sharper than arrows in the conscience, and scorching with fiercer and more enduring torment than coals of juniper.* Note; The everlasting burnings are the destined place of abode for all who love or make a lie, Rev. xxii. 15.

4. He bemoans his present wretched abode. *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesch, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar?* among whom he was forced to take refuge, or among rude and idolatrous nations, like these descendants of Ishmael, or even in the court of Saul, for he found his abode among the wicked courtiers there as irksome as if he had dwelt among the heathen. *My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace; either with Saul, whom no kindness could bend to friendly thoughts of him, or those strangers among whom he sojourned, enemies to the God of peace, and to religion, the only true path of peace. I am for peace, or I peace; a man of peace, pursuing it by every means, ready to bear and forbear any thing for the sake of it, and, however offended, the first to seek reconciliation: but when I speak they are for war, reject every kind overture; and, implacable in their malice, fly to arms.* Note; (1.) It is a grief to those

who love God, to be removed from the public ordinances; and they cannot but sigh for the courts of the Lord's house. (2.) Bad company, into which by necessity we may be forced, is a burden to the gracious soul. (3.) Every man of God must be a man of peace; envy, dispute, and strife, are all from hell. (4.) Though others continue inveterate, that must not restrain us from the exercise of divine charity: this is truly godlike.

P S A L. CXXI.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעְלוֹת *Shiir hammangaloth.*] This psalm is thought by some to have been written by David, while he was in the field with his army during Abalom's rebellion; but if the psalms of ascent were sung by those who went up to the temple, it is most probable that it begins as with a person just come to Jerusalem, and looking round him in great anxiety towards the mountains about it for divine help. In the second verse he fixes his eye upon the mountain where the temple stood, and expects help from thence: here he is supposed to offer his sacrifice, and pay his devotions to God. While this is doing, some person, in the third verse, wishes he may find the favour and protection of his God. From the fourth onward, the priest, probably seeing the usual sign of favour (*Behold*), promises him most assuredly the divine protection and blessing.

Ver. 2. *My help cometh from the Lord*] *My help is from the house of the Lord.* מַיִם *Meim*, is not from the Lord, but from with the Lord; from where he resides.

Ver. 5. *The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand*] In those countries, where the heat of the sun was intolerable, shady places were esteemed as not only very refreshing, but likewise as salutary and necessary to the preservation of life. When therefore the Psalmist stiles Jehovah his shade or shelter, he means that he protected him from danger, and refreshed him with comforts. Mudge, instead of *smite* in the next verse, reads *hurt*, after the Syriac; and he observes, that they attributed distempers to the influences of the sun and moon, and that this expression points to a country life, where they were more exposed day and night to the influences of those luminaries: As the heat of the sun in the day, so the copious dews which fell most abundantly in the moonshine, were very pernicious in those countries.

Ver. 8. *The Lord shall preserve thy going out, &c.*] That

P S A L. CXXII.

David professeth his joy for the church, and prayeth for the peace thereof.

A Song of Degrees of David.

I WAS glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together :

4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give

That is, " Shall protect and prosper thee in all thy undertakings."

REFLECTIONS.—In every distress the Psalmist fled to a covenant God. We have,

1. His prayer. *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, the place of God's tabernacle, or to the heavenly hills, the place where his honour dwelleth, from whence cometh my help; or it may be read interrogatively, Shall I lift mine eyes to the hills? to idols, or the mighty men of the earth? from whence shall my help come? from these? No; in vain is salvation hoped for from these hills, Jer. iii. 23. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth; his arm is my dependance, his grace my sole support, and his power almighty; he who created all things, can and will preserve me from the power of my enemies. Note; (1.) God is a sure refuge to those who fly to him. (2.) When human help is despaired of, with God nothing is impossible.*

2. The answer. Either thus the Psalmist may have replied to himself, or he speaks to every humble petitioner in his circumstances: *He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; though earth and hell assail the believer's soul, the grace and power of Jehovah is sufficient for him. He that keepeth thee will not slumber, watchful over his saints, their sure protector; and well and safely kept must they be, whom he keeps. Behold, he that keepeth Israel, his believing people, shall neither slumber nor sleep, but, ever attentive to their concerns, and careful for their good, shall preserve them from the power of evil. The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord Jesus, the great, the good shepherd of the sheep, whose infinite love engages him to watch them with tenderest care: yea, the least lamb of his flock may confidently expect his kind regard. The Lord is thy shade; as the thick cloud which shelters from the scorching beams of day, so God will cover them with his wings from danger, and refresh them, as under the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, Isa. xxxii. 2. and ever near to fly unto, even upon thy right hand, a very present help in trouble. Thus hid in God, the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night; the fiercest blasts of persecution shall not scorch us up, as the seed on the rock, nor the cold and nipping frosts or inclement dews of temptation blast. Thus hid in God, the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, whether of sin or suffering; sin shall not have dominion, and Satan shall not be able to prevail. He shall preserve thy soul, either the life from death; or if he give the enemy power over the body, the soul shall be precious in his sight, and the glorious crown of martyrdom amply recompence all the pains that this flesh can suffer. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in; in all our travels by land or water, in our commerce*

and business, and in all our affairs, this divine protection is over us, and God will prosper the work of our hands: *from this time forth, and even for evermore, not only the guard of faithful souls through life, but their guide to death, in death their stay, and after death their everlasting portion. Lord Jesus, fulfil these thy promises to my soul, I beseech thee!*

P S A L. CXXII.

Title. שיר המעלות *Shiir hammangaleth.*] Dr. Chandler is of opinion, that this psalm was composed by David after he had settled the ark in mount Sion; when, being informed that many of his people were arrived at Jerusalem to attend on the sacred annual solemnities, and others resorted to it for the same religious purposes, to express his satisfaction on so joyful an occasion, and the pleasing prospect that he had of the city's prosperity, and the future happiness of his people, he composed the following most excellent ode. It is intitled, *A song of Ascensions*; and the nature of it seems to point out the reason of the title, and to shew that it was one of those hymns which were to be sung by the people when they ascended, or came up from their cities and dwellings to the yearly festivals at Jerusalem; as the very learned Bishop Lowth has observed in his excellent performance of *the sacred poetry of the Hebrews*; and the ode is a very elegant and lively one. Bishop Lowth's words are, " This is one of those fifteen psalms which are inscribed *A Song of Ascensions*; i. e. which were sung when the people ascended to Jerusalem; either to celebrate the yearly festivals, or when they returned from the Babylonish captivity." See his 25th Prelection, and the note on the title to the 120th psalm.

Ver. 1. *Let us go into the house, &c.] Let us travel away, &c.* Mudge; who understands the psalm differently from Dr. Chandler. The first verse, says he, expresses the pleasure with which the author received the proposal for going up to Jerusalem. In the second he arrived there: *Our feet are standing within thy gates, &c.* The third, fourth and fifth are a description of it arising from the sight of it: The four last are wishes for its prosperity.

Ver. 3. *Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact]* The verb *חָבַר* *chaber*, denotes the connection or joining of things aptly and closely to each other. Thus it is used of the coupling of the curtains of the tabernacle together, Exod. xxxvi. 18. Hence it is used to denote the connection and society of friendship, affection, and purpose, Gen. xiv. 3. Hof. iv. 17. In the place before us, both senses seem to be united. Jerusalem is compact as to its buildings, and the inhabitants of it firmly united by mutual harmony and friendship. Chandler. Mudge renders it, *As a*

city

thanks unto the name of the LORD.

5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity

within thy palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

9 Because of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek thy good.

city that is placed in the centre of union. Jerusalem, the great seat and centre of religion and justice, was the centre of union to all the tribes; the palace the centre of the city, and the tabernacle of the palace. Blessed and happy is that nation whose prince is the centre of union to his people; and God, or true religion, the common centre and cement both of people and prince. See Delaney's Life of David, book ii. chap. 12.

Ver. 4. *Whither the tribes go up, &c.*] *There the tribes ascend, the tribes of the Lord; there is the testimony of Israel; that they may make their acknowledgments to the name of Jehovah.* The testimony of Israel means the ark. Chandler.

Ver. 5. *For there are set thrones*] "There sits the Sanctuary, and there resides the royal house of David." Mudge.

Ver. 6. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*] Mr. Schultens hath shewn, that the word rendered *peace*, signifies pure unmixed prosperity; undisturbed, and free from the corruption of any calamities. See his Origin. vol. ii. p. 63. This psalm is in the title ascribed to David, and it is worthy the pen of so elegant a writer. From the beginning of it, it plainly appears, that when he had placed the ark in its proper habitation, and so far finished his buildings, as that the city was capable of receiving the people who should come up to celebrate their first festival there, he had been informed that they expressed a general desire of ascending to it, and visiting the house of the Lord; a privilege which they were seldom sure of obtaining before. *I was glad, &c.* ver. 1. When they were actually come up to the city, and had just entered the gate, they are represented as crying out with triumph, in the height of their surprise and joy, when from the gate they beheld the buildings which presented themselves to their view: "Jerusalem is built! 'Tis a city well compact within itself, stately, beautiful, and regular!" The description, as it were, places us under the very gate; and the houses and palaces rise almost conspicuous to our view. What added to their joy, when they beheld the city, was, the presence of the ark in it, the courts of judicature, and the several other circumstances mentioned in the psalm. How natural and affecting also is the sudden change, from admiration into devotion, breathing out ardent prayers for the peace and prosperity of a city which so many considerations united to endear to them, and render them solicitous for its safety. The Psalmist closes the ode with a solemn assurance to his people, whom he styles *his brethren and friends*, that for their sakes, and the high reverence which he bore to the house of God, he would himself both pray for the prosperity, and in the whole of his government endeavour to secure the tranquillity and welfare of the city. And indeed this psalm has ever been admired by the best judges, both for the composition and the matter of it. Chandler.

VOL. III.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, They who love God, cannot but delight to draw near unto him in the ordinances of his worship.

1. The Psalmist expresses his joy at the invitation given by other gracious souls like his own. *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord*, the earthly sanctuary, typical of the church of God; where believers with gladness continue to assemble themselves for public worship, stirring up each other to greater diligence and liveliness in the blessed work. *Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem*, and find there a happy rest after our travels; but how much more delightful when the faithful shall enter the streets of the new Jerusalem, and find the eternal rest which there remaineth for the people of God!

2. He describes this happy place. *Jerusalem is builded as a city, that is compact together; firm the foundation, the houses regularly built, by art and nature strongly defended.* Thus is the church of God built on the rock of ages, the members closely united in love, and protected by the arms of Omnipotence: *whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord*, obedient to his commands, and thrice a year appearing before him at the temple, *to the testimony of Israel*, to the ark, the symbol of the divine presence, to consult his mind and will, and *to give thanks unto the name of the Lord*, offering their sacrifices and praises before him. *For there are set thrones of judgment*, the courts of judicature, and the royal residence of Israel's kings, *the thrones of the house of David.* In the gospel-church, Jesus places his word, and promises his Spirit, as the ark of the testimony, to direct and guide us; there he erects his throne also, reigning as king in the hearts of his people; prescribing the rule of their conduct, and the ordinances of his worship; and with him the thrones of the faithful will shortly be placed; when brought to the heavenly Zion, they shall reign with him in glory everlasting.

2dly, David calls upon every pious Israelite,

1. To pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for the prosperity of all who dwell therein, and for the nation who resorted thither. *Note*: (1.) We are bound to pray for our place and nation, for in the peace thereof we shall have peace. (2.) The prosperity and peace of God's church will be the first concern and prayer of all the friends of David's Son.

2. The blessing of such prayers will return on those who offer them. *They shall prosper that love thee*, their souls shall be refreshed with the graces they beg for others, and they shall spiritually increase with the increase of God.

3. The proper prayers are suggested. *Peace be within thy walls*, outward peace from enemies, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and mutual peace and

O O

love,

P S A L. CXXIII.

The godly profess their confidence in God, and pray to be delivered from contempt.

A Song of Degrees.

UNTO thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their masters, *and* as the eyes of a

love, which no dispute, discord, or divisions may ever interrupt: Oh when shall it yet be! *and prosperity within thy palaces*, for it will then go well with the church of God, when they, who by eminence of station are most exalted, abound with gifts and graces, for the government and edification of the body.

4. He resolves that this shall be his own prayer and practice; *I will say, Peace be within thee*, and not only with heart desire it, but with hand labour for it; *I will seek thy good.* *Note;* To pray one way, and act another, is arrant hypocrisy. Two reasons he suggests why he should thus do, [1.] *For my brethren and companions' sake*; the saints of God, high or low, rich or poor; David counted them as brethren, delighted in their company, and sought their happiness; and so should we. [2.] *Because of the house of the Lord our God*; God's glory was his first pursuit, the enlargement of his church his great desire, and therefore he could not but pray for it, and labour to promote it. The Lord help us to go and do likewise.

P S A L. CXXIII.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעְלוֹת *shir hammangaloth.*] Bishop Patrick thinks this psalm was composed in that time of distress, when the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh to besiege Hezekiah in Jerusalem. He observes, that Hezekiah desired Isaiah to lift up his prayer for the remnant that was left: 2 Kings, xix. 4. Isa. xxxvii. 4. Accordingly we read, 2 Chron. xxxii. 20. that both he and Hezekiah cried unto the Lord; and we may suppose, continues the Bishop, that Isaiah lift up his eyes to heaven, and repeated the words of this psalm. Mr. Mudge remarks, however, that this psalm seems to be pronounced as by persons just come within view of the temple, and with steadfast eyes praying to be relieved from the contemptuous treatment which they endured from their insolent enemies.

Ver. 2. *As the eyes of servants look unto the hand*] Masters had a power not only of commanding, but of severely punishing their servants; accordingly, this *looking to the hand*, &c. properly denotes the servant under chastisement, turning the eyes, and looking to the hand that striketh, and beseeching and importuning for mercy; an argument of a meek, patient, and reforming disposition. On the contrary, it is objected to the Jews, Isa. ix. 13. *that they turn not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts.*

Ver. 4. *Of those that are at ease*] Or, *Of the insolent.* The Hebrew word שְׁאֲנָנִים *shaananim* is used not only for *quiet* or *secure*, in the original notion, but, by a metonymy of the

maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.

4 Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, *and* with the contempt of the proud.

cause for the effect, for *insolent* or *scornful*; because ease and security too often make men so.

REFLECTIONS.—We have,

1. The Psalmist's approach unto God. *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens*, the place of his glorious abode, whither our prayer must be directed, and where with the eye of faith we must behold him, ready to hear and answer us.

2. The temper in which he approached God, he illustrates by the similitude of servants looking to their master or mistress for direction, sustenance, protection, chastisement, wages; *so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God*, for his divine teaching how to walk and please him; for his continual supplies of living bread to nourish our souls; for support against all those who would obstruct us in our blessed Master's service; for the wages of the eternal inheritance which God hath promised, not of debt indeed, but of grace; or for such kind correction as he sees we need, and under which we cheerfully and patiently submit, *until that he have mercy upon us*, which he infallibly will show in time and eternity, to all those who perseveringly wait on him as their only refuge.

3. The plea that he urges. *Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us*; on this alone we must found our hope, for merit we have none; in one word, it comprehends all our wants, which God knows better than we do ourselves; and it is repeated to shew the fervent importunity which those who are endued with the spirit of prayer use, when deeply sensible of the want of that mercy which they seek; *for we are exceedingly filled with contempt*, the common lot of God's people, who are despised as poor, ignorant, deluded; their holy peculiarities in sentiment and practice ridiculed, and their persons treated as the scum and off-scouring of all things, by a sensual, proud, and adulterous generation. *Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud*; the scorners who set God at defiance, live after the indulgence of their lusts, careless and secure about futurity, puffed up with affluence and honour, taking pleasure in vilifying and insulting the despised people of God. But let such know, that there is one who resents these indignities, and will return them; the tables will quickly change at the prayer of the faithful, the despised followers of Jesus be exalted to the throne of glory, and those proud sensualists thrust down into the pit, and covered with everlasting shame and contempt.

P S A L.

P S A L. CXXIV.

The church blesteth God for a miraculous deliverance.

A Song of Degrees of David.

IF *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say;

2 If *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:

3 Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:

4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:

5 Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.

6 Blessed *be* the LORD, who hath not given

us as a prey to their teeth.

7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

8 Our help *is* in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

P S A L. CXXV.

The safety of such as trust in God. A prayer for the godly, and against the wicked.

A Song of Degrees.

THEY that trust in the LORD *shall be as* mount Zion, *which* cannot be removed, *but* abideth for ever.

2 *As* the mountains *are* round about Jeru-

P S A L. CXXIV.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת *shir hammangaloth.*] This psalm was composed by David; but the particular occasion of it is not known with any certainty. Dr. Delaney conjectures, that he wrote it upon the victory mentioned 2 Sam. v. 20. David said upon that occasion, *The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as a breach of waters:* and he thinks this conjecture seems probable by comparing this expression with the third and fourth verses of this psalm: the objection to which is, that in the *psalm* the allusion of the breach of waters is applied to David's enemies; in the *history*, to God. This psalm was so agreeable to the state of their circumstances at that time, that it was constantly used by the Levites at the return of the Jews from their captivity; and it is, as Dr. Hammond observes, very suitable to any other eminent deliverance wrought by God for his servants.

Ver. 1. *If it had not been the Lord who was, &c.*] *Unless the Lord had been with us, now, &c.* and so the 2d verse. Houbigant.

Ver. 5. *Then, &c.*] *Then it had passed over our soul, even* { proud swelling } *waters.*

REFLECTIONS.—The greater the danger is to which we are exposed, the greater doth the power and grace of our God appear in our rescue, and the more are we indebted to him in love and praise.

1. The enemies of God's church and people are many and mighty; rising up fierce as a lion, and ready to devour them, *quick* and eager in the pursuit, and raging in their wrath to destroy them. *Then* in that day of trial we may truly say, *the waters had overwhelmed us, and the stream had gone over our soul; then the proud waters had gone over our soul,* the floods of persecution, affliction, temptation had prevailed, and we had sunk as a stone in the mighty waters, *if,*—and a blessed *if* it is—

2. *If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, or with us,* for our strength is weakness, and we have no power to stand, either against our foes without or within; but having a friend close to our side, one so faithful to stand

by us, so almighty to save us, even Jehovah, we cannot sink under these mighty waters; fixed, as upon a munition of rocks, we may look down secure, and mock their impotent rage.

3. The Psalmist, in the person of the faithful, blessed God for their support and deliverance. *Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth,* he hath broken the teeth of the lions, our persecutors; and, as a bird from the fowler's snare, are we escaped from our wily foes. *Note;* When the faithful are nearest in appearance to be overcome, and perish, then shall they be made more eminently to experience the salvation of God.

4. Past experience encourages the faithful to stay themselves still upon God. *Our help is in the name of the Lord,* we have no other able or willing to save us, but *he who made heaven and earth,* and he can assuredly save to the uttermost. Let Israel therefore trust in the Lord.

P S A L. CXXV.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת *shir hammangaloth.*] The title of this psalm does not tell us its author. Bishop Patrick supposes it to have been a pious exhortation to the people, to trust in God, when Sennacherib's army threatened them with destruction; and perhaps, says he, these were some of the *comfortable* words which, as we read, Hezekiah spoke to them, 2 Chron. xxxii. 6, 7, 8. when God chastised them by that *rod of his anger,* as he calls Sennacherib, Isai. x. 5. which the Psalmist here foretold should not long afflict them. But Dr. Delaney supposes it to have been made by David just before the attack of the strongholds of Sion; and in this light he would consider the Psalmist as answering the objections which we may imagine to have been made in a council of war held upon this occasion, from the great strength of the place; and religiously reminding them, that under the good providence of God they might be confident of surmounting all difficulties. Life of David, book ii. chap. 6.

Ver. 2. *As the mountains are round, &c.*] This allusion to the situation of Jerusalem expresses very properly the divine protection, which defended them on every side from the outrages and insults of their enemies. Perhaps the

falem, fo the LORD is round about his people from henceforth, even for ever.

3 For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.

4 Do good, O LORD, unto *those that be good*, and to *them that are upright* in their hearts.

5 As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: *but peace shall be upon Israel.*

short description of it which Mr. Sandys has given us, may help us to conceive this matter the better. "This city," says he, "is seated on a rocky mountain, every way to be ascended, except a little on the north, with steep ascents and deep vallies naturally fortified: for the most part environed with other not far removed mountains, as if placed in the midst of an amphitheatre; for on the east is mount Olivet, separated from the city by the valley of Jehoshaphat, which also circleteth part of the north. On the south the mountain of Offiner interposed with the valley of Gehinnom; and on the west it was formerly fenced with the valley of Gihon and the mountains adjoining."

Ver. 3. For the rod] That is, the power of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot or portion; i. e. the country of the righteous; that the righteous, &c. The meaning seems to be, that if their enemies had gained their purpose on Jerusalem, and continued in possession of it, there would have been an utter extinction of the Jewish religion; they would all have been confounded in one scene of iniquity: the righteous would either have been forced or tempted to do as the rest did.

REFLECTIONS.—They who have an almighty God to fly to, have nothing to fear; and his great and precious promises are a sure support to every faithful soul.

1. Their character. They are *his people*, justified through the blood of the covenant, converted by his Spirit, and separated for his service. *They trust in the Lord*, on his merit and on his strength, for pardon, acceptance, support, and comfort, under every trial and difficulty. They are *righteous* through his grace,—their hearts and ways are renewed. Blessed are the people who are in such a case, for to them all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus.

2. He prays that God would fulfil what he promises. *Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts*; such they are by his grace, and such he trusts they will continue, the God of all grace continuing to vouchsafe to them a continual rich supply of his spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

3. He foresees and foretels the end of the ungodly. *As*

P S A L. CXXVI.

The church, celebrating her incredible return out of captivity, prayeth for, and prophesieth the good success thereof.

A Song of Degrees.

WHEN the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

3 The LORD hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad.

4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as

for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, either the finners, who rush into the paths of error and immorality, or the false professors, who in time of trial apostatise, and fly to sinful expedients to extricate themselves from their sufferings, *the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity*, to the place of terrible execution, and cast them into that eternal abyss, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched: *but peace shall be upon Israel*; it is either a prayer that it may be, or a promise that it shall be so. The end of the righteous is as blessed as the end of the wicked is miserable; peace, present and eternal, is their happy portion; and when the smoke of their torment, who have no rest night nor day, ascendeth, the saints in glory shall rejoice and sing.

P S A L. CXXVI.

Title. שיר המעלות *Shiir hammangaloth.*] This psalm is generally allowed to have been composed by Ezra, upon the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. Mr. Mudge conjectures from the 4th verse, that it was written just at the juncture of the restoration, before it was fully completed.

Ver. 1. When the Lord, &c.] That is, "When the proclamation came forth to give us liberty to return to our own country, after a long captivity, (see Ezra, i. 2, 3.) we could scarcely believe it, but were apt to look upon ourselves as only in a dream of so great happiness." What we translate *them that dream*, is by many expositors rendered, *them that are recovered to health*: a sense which may be very proper, as signifying that this wonderful change was like the recovery of health after a very tedious sickness.

Ver. 2. Then was our mouth, &c.] *From that moment was, &c. From that moment said they, &c. i. e.* "Never before would we indulge any joy; never before would the heathen, the Babylonians, acknowledge that God had done, &c."

Ver. 4—6. Turn again our captivity, O Lord] This prayer seems to be, "We beseech thee to perfect this good work which thou hast begun, and turn our captivity, that we may refresh and cultivate thy holy land, as thou turnest the rivers of the south, the rivers of Egypt,"

the streams in the south.

5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

“Egypt, to gladden, fructify, and replenish their dry and “thirsty soil.” For the understanding of this verse, which, taken by itself, is a little obscure, we should observe, says Dr. Hammond, that the queen of Sheba, or Meroe in Ethiopia, is called, Matth. xii. 42. *the queen of the South*; and that the original word נֶגֶב *negeb*, here rendered the *South*, signifies a dry and parched soil; and by a figure is very well used to signify the south, as the soil of the southern countries is very hot, dry, and burnt up with the sun. This, particularly, is the case in Egypt, where they would never have any crops at all, were it not for the annual overflowing of their rivers: so that the Psalmist here prays, that God would turn their captivity, as he doth the rivers of the south, or of Egypt, to gladden and replenish the otherwise parched and barren earth. Houbigant renders it in the past tense, thus, *Our captivity, O Lord, is restored, as a river into a dry place*. It seems to be agreeable to the context to render the verb in the perfect tense; and accordingly he renders the verbs in the next verses, in the same manner, *They that had sown in tears, shall reap in joy*. He went forth weeping, who sowed his seed: he shall return exulting, bearing his sheaves with him. Instead of *precious seed*, Mudge reads a *cast of seed*. The original words, says he, mean no more than the seed corn, which the sower carries with him, which is to be taken out, and with extended arm thrown into the earth. The sense and application of the allusion appears to be this: “As the poor husband-“man, who, with a heavy heart, throws his seed into the “ground in a time of scarcity, and in an unkind season, “expecting little or no crop from it, yet frequently finds “his corn springing up plentifully, and far beyond his “expectation, and at the time of harvest goes home “loaded with sheaves;—so shall this small handful of peo-“ple, who are come to plant themselves here again, and “have laid the foundation of the temple with a great “mixture of sadness and tears, (see Ezra, iii. 12.) then “shout for joy, to see so great an increase of their bre-“thren, and this pious work, by their means, brought to “perfection.” See Neh. iv. 7, 8.

REFLECTIONS.—Great was the joy when, loosed from the Babylonish yoke, the captive Jews returned to Zion; greater will it be, when from their present dispersion they shall turn unto the Lord; but greatest will be the joy of God’s faithful Israel, when, by the redemption of Jesus finally and eternally delivered from sin and the grave, they shall meet at the heavenly hill, and all become one fold, under one shepherd. We have,

1. The pleasing surprise which seized them, on hearing liberty proclaimed by Cyrus, the instrument that God employed to execute his purposes. Scarce could they believe the glad tidings true; and, like men awaking from some pleasing dream, hesitated whether it were fancy or reality; but,

P S A L. CXXVII.

The virtue of God’s blessing. Good children are his gift.

A Song of Degrees for Solomon.

EXCEPT the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except

soon convinced that God had remembered them, and turned their captivity, with songs of exultation they hailed the happy day. Thus when the awakened conscience, that poring over its guilt and misery has been ready to sink into despair, hears the good news of pardon, grace, and glory, richly and eternally bestowed on the vilest of sinners who will believe and obey, scarcely can the heart receive the message, it appears so much too great and good to be true, till, by divine faith assured of the veracity of the promises, the soul triumphs in God our Saviour, and is filled with joy and peace in believing.

2. Their neighbours’ admiration, and their own acknowledgments. *Then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them*; they who had before despised them, Psal. cxxxvii. 7. beheld with wonder and conviction God’s peculiar care over his people: and when divine grace converts the sinner’s heart, the blessed change will often extort conviction even from the enemies of the truth, and force them to acknowledge that it is the finger of God. *The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad*; gladly they echo back the confession of the heathens, and ascribe to their dear Lord, the praise of his wondrous work, the gracious instance of his love, the glorious matter of their joy.

3. The church’s prayer. *Turn again our captivity, O Lord, at the streams in the south*, which may be considered as their prayer for their expected deliverance, or as the request of those who were returned, and desired to have their brethren come up, who remained in Babylon: or as the request of the church of Christ, for deliverance from the antichristian yoke; or of the spiritual believer for himself, desiring deliverance from his in-dwelling corruptions, which would be more welcome than rivers of water in the parched deserts of Arabia to the fainting traveller.

4. The promise in answer to their prayer. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy*, which may be applied, 1. To every true penitent, who, with tears of penitential sorrow, returns unto God, a *precious seed* which God regards, and upon which he will give his blessing, causing to spring up a plenteous harvest of peace and joy. 2. To every faithful minister who goes forth, bearing the precious seed of the gospel word, and weeps over poor sinners, who continue disobedient, for whose immortal souls he prays and labours, and God gives him to see the travail of his soul in many seals given to his ministry, his joy now, and to be his crown of rejoicing in the day of the appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

P S A L. CXXVII.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְשִׁלְמֹה *shir hammangaloth lishlomoh*.] This is said to have been composed by Solomon, and is observed to be a commentary upon a pious maxim, which is several times repeated in the Proverbs, That no eadearours

the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

2 *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

3 *Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD:*

and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

4 *As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.*

5 *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*

ours of man can be prosperous, without the blessing and assistance of God. Mr. Mudge, however, observes, that there seems to be no other reason for attributing the psalm to Solomon, than that the first verse talks of building a house. It evidently points to a certain family, which God had blessed with security, affluence, and children; and was occasioned, I suppose, by the lovely appearance they made when they came to present themselves before the temple, to pay the customary homage to God.

Ver. 1. Except the Lord, &c.] In this first verse the Psalmist shews how vain it is to attempt any thing, if the Lord do not prosper it, both in relation to private families and public societies; for by *building the house*, is meant the increase of children and the bringing them up in the fear of Jehovah; by which *houses*, i. e. families, are built up, supported, and continued. In this sense the expression is used, Gen. xvi. 2., Exod. i. 21., Deut. xxv. 9, &c. As, unless God *keep the city*, that is, guard and preserve public societies, the watchmen will do little good; so unless God build up private families, all the industry of men will not be successful for that purpose.

Ver. 2. It is vain, &c.] It is vain for you, ye that rise early, and late take rest; that eat the bread of fatigue: it is thus he giveth sleep to his beloved. Mudge: who observes, that the words, *it is thus he giveth*, and *behold*, in the next verse, evidently point, as he suggests in the note on the title, to a particular person whom God had blessed, without which all endeavours are vain. Some render the last clause, *Since he giveth to his beloved sleep*: but Green translates the passage, “*It is in vain for you to rise up, &c.—unless the Lord bless your endeavours: whereas he giveth to his beloved even while they sleep.*” The plain meaning seems to be, that God affords and bestows to his *beloved*, or to good men, rest and comfort of life; and withal provides as much wealth for them and their families, as is best for them; and indeed much more genuine wealth than *they* can procure who incessantly harass and fatigue themselves, and deny themselves the enjoyment of all worldly comforts, in order to enrich their posterity. Mr. Merrick seems to have expressed it well in his paraphrase:

Why rise ye early, late take rest,
And eat the bread of care?
The balm of sleep, his gift confess,
His children only share.

Ver. 4, 5. Children of the youth, &c.] These are opposed to the children of old age; and of these it is frequently observed, that they are the strongest, being, as Jacob says of Reuben, *his might, the beginning of his strength*; and of such it is here said, *they are as arrows in the hands of the mighty man*; i. e. able to defend their parent against the attempts of his enemies, as well as weapons can be. *His quiver full of them*, means his house as full of children as the quiver

of a mighty man is of arrows. *They shall speak with the enemies in the gate*, means, they shall plead for him against his adversaries, in the courts of judicature; which, as we have frequently remarked, were held at the gates of cities.

REFLECTIONS.—The less we depend on our own schemes, or lean to our own understanding, and the more we look up to God, and seek help and direction from him, the surer will be the prosperity of every work of our hands.

1. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.* Whatever projects we may conceive for the advancement of ourselves or families; whatever plans we may draw, for rearing up some noble pile for our abode, it is a Babel tower, and the family will be miserable, unless the Lord give his blessing and success. And if in temporals, much more in spirituals, are we bound to depend upon him; the wisest of ministers, and the best of men, cannot square one of the living stones to raise the church of God, unless his power and grace work effectually with them.

2. As vain is the watchman's care. It is not the multitude of guards, or their wakeful vigilance, but a greater Guardian who can preserve the city. The most vigilant and active watchman upon the walls of Zion, cannot prevent the irruption of heresies, and the breaches of ungodliness: this must come from above; nevertheless, he must do his duty as an unworthy instrument.

3. Vain are all our anxious labours, without God's blessing. *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows* earned by hard toil; all this care, assiduity, and diligence, is fruitless; if God be not regarded, he will disappoint the hopes of the worldly-minded, and mar all their labours. But where honest industry is employed in dependance upon him, *so he giveth his beloved sleep*, no carking cares disturb the repose of such; they sleep in peace, in the arms of the Divine love, and rise refreshed and happy, to enjoy the new mercies which, with the returning day, are showered upon them.

4. Children are God's gifts. He that formed the first man from the clay, must form each embryo in the womb; and when they are given, from him it comes that these children are our blessings and reward: the most pious parent sees a corrupted offspring, till God, by his grace, converts them, and makes them doubly our comfort and joy.

5. They are happy who have these gifts of God. *As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth*, those sprung from parents in the prime of their youth: or who are themselves grown up healthy and strong, able to assist their parents in their declining age. *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them, they shall not be ashamed*, their ill conduct shall never reflect upon or grieve their parents, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate; their children will

P S A L. CXXVIII.

The sundry blessings which follow them that fear God.

A Song of Degrees.

BLESSED is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.

2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the

sides of thine house: thy children like olive-plants round about thy table.

4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.

5 The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.

will be their advocates, and their number and strength, their support and defence. Happy the parent blest with such children! Happy such children as learn thus to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents' labours of love!

P S A L. CXXVIII.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת *shir hammangaloth.*] This psalm is thought to have been written by the author of the preceding one, and to have been used by the Jews as a hymn in their office of matrimony. The subject and occasion of it are the same with those of the former. The two last verses seem to have been spoken by the priest; as probably was the former psalm, and directed to the good man himself, who came at the head of his family to pay his homage and make his offerings. There is a beautiful and gradual rise observable in the blessings which are here promised.

Ver. 2. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands.] That is, provided thou thus fear the Lord: for it is observable, that all these blessings are promised as the reward of a religious conduct, or fearing the Lord. See the REFLECTIONS at the end.

Ver. 3. Thy wife shall be, &c.] The author of the Observations remarks, that it does not appear from the accounts of any traveller, that it was ever the custom of the Jews to conduct vines along the sides of their houses. However common this may be among us, it does not appear to be an eastern custom, or to make any part of the verdure with which they set off their courts; I doubt, therefore, the late very ingenious and learned Dr. Doddridge was mistaken in supposing the occasion of our Lord's comparing himself to a vine might be his standing "near a window, or in some court by the side of the house, where the sight of a vine might suggest this beautiful simile;" to which, after referring to the present passage, he adds, "That circumstance was, no doubt, common in Judea, which abounded with the finest grapes;" (see his Family Expositor, vol. ii. p. 475. note b.) and I am apprehensive that this is an additional proof of the necessity of attending to the customs of the east when we would explain the scriptures. The Jewish nation would not have admitted this illustration, had this management been common in the other parts of that country; for, according to their writers, Jerusalem was distinguished from all the other towns of Judea, as by several other peculiarities, so in particular by its having no gardens in it, or any trees, excepting some rose-bushes, which it seems had been customary from the

days of the ancient prophets: consequently there could be no vine, in their opinion, about the side of the house in which our Lord was when he spoke these words. But this psalm is no proof, I apprehend, that it was practised *anywhere else* in that country; though it has been thus understood by other writers besides this author; and among the rest, by no less considerable persons than Cocceius, Hammond, Patrick, and Rabbi Kimchi. For, as it is evident that the good man's sons being like olive plants about his table, means not that they should be like the olive plants which grew round his table; (it being, I presume, a thought in Bishop Patrick which will not be defended, that the Psalmist refers to a table spread in an arbour composed of young olive trees; for we find no such arbours in the Levant, nor is the tree very fit for such a purpose;) so, in like manner, the first clause must signify, "Thy wife shall be, in the sides or private apartments of thy house, fruitful as a thriving vine." The place here mentioned—the sides of the house—referring to the wife, not to the vine; as the other—the table—refers to the children, not to the olives. See Observations, p. 103.

REFLECTIONS.—*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction,* says Solomon, Prov. i. 7. They have none of that fear, because they care not for the benefits which attend it. If the wicked could be without fear, they would think themselves happy; but they have the full measure of it, of destroying, distracting, confounding fear, which always comes to pass. *The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him; that which he fears most shall beset him;* Prov. x. 24. whereas the fear of the devout and pious man is comfortable and nourishing, and under God's blessing drives from him, and secures him from all the ill that he fears. *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate;* Prov. viii. 13. And whoever through grace hates these as much as he ought to do, need fear nothing else. Love is the natural parent of filial fear, and never was without it. No man ever loved with a very moderate passion, who did not exceedingly fear to offend or displease the object of his love. And truly, if we do not fear God, so as to hate every thing he hates, and love every thing he loves; if we be not afraid of offending him, and jealous lest our addresses and solicitations may not meet with acceptance from him, it must proceed from want of love, which can never be without this filial fear.

We have in this psalm,

1. The truly blessed character. *He that feareth the Lord and*

P S A L. CXXIX.

An exhortation to praise God, for saving Israel in their great afflictions. The haters of the church are cursed.

A Song of Degrees.

MANY a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:

2 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.

3 The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.

and walketh in his ways, making his will the rule of duty, desiring to be obedient in all things, and fearing nothing so much as to offend him.

2. The happiness promised. In general, all the felicity of God's people shall be the portion of that soul. *Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee*; all needful blessings shall be thine; in particular, (1.) *Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands*; he shall have strength to labour, a blessing upon his honest industry, and a heart to enjoy the good things God bestows. (2.) *Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine by the sides of thine house*; of earthly blessings this is the chief; a wife that adorns the house of her abode; a keeper at home, as a vine fixed to the walls, leaning for support on him to whom her desire is, and fruitful in those tenderest pledges and cements of connubial love. (3.) *Thy children like olive-plants round about thy table*, a flourishing offspring, rising by steps like plants of different years; and round a table, which mercy plentifully spreads for their provision. If they but grow up trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified, then shall that father hang over them with delight, and pour forth his warmest benediction upon them. (4.) *The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion*, the blessing of the basket, the store, and the family are great, but infinitely more valuable are the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus: those continue but the passing days of time, these endure to the ages of eternity. (5.) *Thou shalt see thy children's children*, the crown of old age, Prov. xvii. 6. a rising generation, transmitting down from age to age, not only the resemblance of the persons, but also the piety of their fathers, who seem still to live in them. (6.) *Thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life*, national prosperity, and peace upon Israel, or the flourishing state of the church of God, and the abundance of spiritual peace and joy shed abroad upon the assemblies, and in the hearts of the Israel of God. Amen! So be it!

P S A L. CXXIX.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת *Shir hamangaloth*] This psalm is thought to have been written by Ezra, at the return of the Jews from their captivity: and then *they that hate Zion*, v. 5. may well be supposed to mean the neighbouring nations, who maliciously obstructed the Jews in rebuilding their city.

Ver. 3. *The plowers ploughed, &c.*] That is, "They reduced us to a state of abject slavery, and used us most

4 The LORD is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

5 Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.

6 Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up:

7 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.

8 Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD be upon you: we bless you in the name of the LORD.

cruelly in it. *The plowers ploughed, &c.* they scourged us so severely, that the marks remained for a long while after, like the traces of a plough; and in this were represented the sufferings of the Lord Christ, who would meet with the like inhuman treatment." The same idea is continued in the next verse: *The cords*, rendered by Green the *plough cords*, mean those with which the yokes were tied. The sense is, "God hath delivered us from the yoke and tyranny of our enemies."

Ver. 5. *Let them*] Or, *They shall*. And so in the next verse, the last clause of which may be rendered, *Which withereth before it be plucked up*. Mr. Maundrell, on his way from Tripoli to Aleppo, observed a particular method used by the country people in gathering their corn. "They plucked it up by handfuls from the roots, leaving the most fruitful fields as naked as if nothing had ever grown upon them. This was their practice (says he) in all the places of the east that I have seen; and the reason is, that they may lose none of the straw, which is generally very short, and necessary for the subsistence of their cattle, no hay being made here." I mention this, because it seems to give light to this passage of the Psalmist, where there seems a manifest allusion to this custom. Our Bible Translation renders it, *afore it groweth up*, but in doing so, it differs from most, or all other copies; and here we may truly say, the old is better. There is indeed mention of a *mower* in the next verse; but then it is such a mower as *filleteth not his hand*; which confirms rather than weakens the former interpretation. See Maundrell's Travels. Mr. Mudge observes, that as the 7th and 8th verses cannot refer to the grass on the house-tops, it is necessary to understand something to which they may refer; as *grass*, or *crop*, or *harvest*, &c. He therefore renders the 7th verse, *like that* (namely, crop or harvest) *wherewith the reaper, &c.* See Bishop Lowth's 12th Prelection.

REFLECTIONS.—Afflictions are designed to prove the faith and patience of the saints. We have here,

1. The Psalmist reflecting upon the past distresses of Israel: many a time had they been a prey to Philistines, Ammonites, Egyptians; yea, even now, Israel, after the flesh, lies under its saddest state of captivity. From the days of their being first formed into a people, by their transgressions they often provoked God to leave them for a while under oppression, when ploughers ploughed their backs, and like the furrows of the field they were laid waste and desolate. This may also refer to Christ Jesus, whose

P S A L. CXXX.

The Psalmist professeth his hope in prayer, and his patience in hope: he exhorteth Israel to hope in God.

A Song of Degrees.

OUT of the depths have I cried unto thee,
O LORD.

2 LORD, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities:
O LORD, who shall stand?

4 But *there is* forgiveness with thee: that

thou mayest be feared.

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

6 My soul *waiteth* for the LORD more than they that watch for the morning: *I say, more than* they that watch for the morning.

7 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption.

8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

whose name is Israel, Isa. xlix. 3. from the days of youth persecuted and afflicted, and his back with scourges furrowed deep; and with him every member of his body mystical may expect more or less to share.

2. He gratefully acknowledges, *They have not prevailed against me*; whatever persecutions the church hath suffered, it hath risen fairer for the floods which have passed over it; and every faithful soul, though sore troubled and tempted, by experience is enabled to say, they have not prevailed against me: and the reason is given, *the Lord is righteous*, hath compassion on his people, is faithful to his promises, and just to avenge their quarrels. *He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked*, the cords with which they enslaved his people; or their traces, with which they ploughed up their backs, and their treacherous devices, which are disappointed.

3. He prays that the enemies of Zion, of God's church and people, who hate and persecute them, may be confounded and turned back, withering like grass on the house-top, destitute of moisture, and exposed to the scorching sun, uselefs and fruitless: *the mower filleth not his hand therewith, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom*; thus may all their designs be abortive, and their schemes be frustrated, and never ripen into execution: nor will any pious passenger pray for God's blessing upon them, as was usually done to the reapers, Ruth, ii. 4. but rather *curse their habitation*, Job, v. 3. and beg of God to defeat their malicious contrivances; that *their harvest may be a heap in the day of grief*, Isa. xvii. 11.

P S A L. CXXX.

Title. שיר המעלות *Shiir hamngaloth.*] Bishop Patrick observes, that some think this psalm was composed by David after the affair of Bathsheba (see ver. 3, 4.); but that in his opinion it was composed by him after the persecution of Saul: nevertheless, it cannot be said to be his with any certainty, and perhaps it may be more applicable to the times soon after the captivity; for it seems rather to relate to the distress of the nation at large, than to that of any one particular person. The Syriac translators understand it so; for in their title of it, they refer it to the times of Nehemiah. Mr. Mudge observes, that the psalm has two states; in the first of which the author prays God to forgive him his sins, and to remit the consequences of them, in strong expectation that pur-

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suant to his word he would grant his prayer. In the second, he has obtained his request, and encourages therefore all his brethren to put their trust in God, for redeeming them from their sins, and the punishment of them.

Ver. 1. Out of the depths] "Out of the deep waters, "with which I am almost overwhelmed." By these is frequently represented, as we have observed, the extremity of affliction. See Ps. lxix. 2, &c.

Ver. 3. Shouldest mark iniquities] i. e. As a rigorous judge, exactly take notice of every offence committed against thee and thy holy commandments:—*Who shall stand?* "Who could be able to stand the trial, so as to be "acquitted by thee?"

Ver. 4. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared] For, otherwise, who could hold up his head before him? See the note on Psalm cxi. 10. and Sherlock's Discourses, vol. iv. Disc. 5.

Ver. 6. My soul waiteth, &c.] Or, *My soul hasteth to the Lord, from the guards in the morning, the guards in the morning.* Mr. Green renders it, *My soul waiteth for the Lord more ardently than those who watch for the appearance of the morning.* The Psalmist seems to mean the priests, or some officers of theirs, who were peculiarly appointed from a tower to expect the first appearance of the break of day, when the morning oblation was to be offered. The Psalmist here intimates, that they were not earlier than he in his daily address to God.

Ver. 8. From all his iniquities] i. e. From the guilt, the nature, and the punishment of them. Redemption from sins always includes the punishment to be suffered in consequence of them.

REFLECTIONS.—This is frequently reckoned among the seven penitential psalms; and indeed it is a most expressive description of the humbled sinner's return to God: deep laden with iniquity, his complaints are bitter. *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord*; an awakened sinner, brought to a sense of his guilt, feels such a load upon his conscience, as seems to press him down into the belly of hell. He is sunk under the floods of corruption; and but a step from despair, perishing he cries, *Save, Lord! hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications*; as long as a sinner is out of hell, the door of hope is yet open, and the voice of prayer may be heard: it is never too late; if God stirs up our souls to cry importunately after him, it is be-

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P S A L. CXXXI.

David, professing his humility, exhorteth Israel to hope in God.
A Song of Degrees of David.

LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high

cause he intends to be found by us in mercy: but it must only be hoped for in a way of mercy and with self-renunciation, and deepest confessions of our own vileness. *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities: O Lord, who shall stand?* not that our most secret thoughts pass unobserved by him; no, he sees them afar off: and should he in strict justice call us to his bar, we cannot answer him for one of a thousand of our days; we must lay our hands on our mouths, and our mouths in the dust, plead utterly guilty, justify him in his judgments, and can only cast our souls on the mercy of our Judge. Thus desperate is the case of every sinner, and there is no difference; we are all by nature in the same condemnation, unable either to bear the scrutiny of his law, or to endure the dreadful sentence of his judgment. *But there is forgiveness with thee, God hath himself contrived and accomplished that mysterious method of saving sinners, in which, without impeachment of his justice, he might, to the uttermost, exercise his mercy: through the propitiation of Jesus, a ransom is found, and for his sake God will be merciful to our unrighteousness: that thou mayest be feared; nothing steels the heart against God like despair; men then rush into sin with determined waywardness, as the horse rusheth into the battle; but a sense of his forgiving love engages the heart to fear the Lord and his goodness, and bids us never again wilfully transgress against a God so gracious. I wait for the Lord at mercy's door, unworthy of notice, yet hoping for his kind regard; my soul doth wait, not with feigned professions, but with heart-felt desires, and in his word do I hope; emboldened by his promises, even when I can see nothing in myself but what preaches despair. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say more than they that watch for the morning; as the Levites in the temple, who with sleepless eyes had stood at their several posts, longed for the morning to break, that they might be relieved; so eagerly did his soul long for the beams of God's reconciled countenance to arise upon him, and his sad distress to be removed, by a sense of pardoning love; nor was ever soul, who thus trusted in him, and waited on him, confounded. Let Israel hope in the Lord, the Israel of God; to the end of time, under all their fears and dejections: for with the Lord there is mercy for every miserable sinner that through Jesus Christ draws near a throne of grace; and with him is plenteous redemption, grace abounding to the chief of sinners, comprehending the removal of every misery, and including the gift of all conceivable blessedness; yea, more than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities, all who perseveringly cleave to him, from the guilt, the power, the consequences of them, present and eternal. Lord, may my soul be found among thy Israel, and partake of this rich, plenteous, and eternal redemption!*

for me.

2 Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

3 Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.

P S A L. CXXXI.

Title. שיר המעלות לדוד Shîr hammangaloth ledavid] David is thought to have written this psalm in order to clear himself of any design which his enemies charged upon him, of affecting the kingdom during Saul's life. The psalm tends to shew, that a quiet peaceful submission to God's providence is the best way to obtain his favour.

Ver. 1. My heart is not haughty] i. e. "I harbour no such ambitious designs as to aspire to the throne during the life of Saul:"—*Nor are mine eyes lofty:* "I do not look superciliously upon any man, as if I had vainly exalted myself above my proper rank and condition."

Ver. 2. Surely, &c.] On the contrary, I compose and hush my soul like one that is weaning in his mother's arms; as one that is weaning in the arms, is my soul. Mudg.

Ver. 3. Let Israel hope, &c.] i. e. "Let all good men, all the children of God, in like manner, modestly place their confidence and hope in the Lord, as long as they live; and choose rather to be depressed, than by any undue means to raise themselves to greatness and honour."

REFLECTIONS.—We have,

1. David's profession of his integrity. *Lord, my heart is not haughty;* naturally it is so in every man, but by divine grace he had been brought to entertain humble apprehensions of himself, since a discovery of his sin, helplessness, and corruption had, by the word and Spirit of God, been made to him; *nor mine eyes lofty,* superciliously looking down upon inferiors with disdain, or looking up to superiors with envy: he bowed before God, as the publican, in deep humility; and, far from aspiring thoughts, could have been content, if God so pleased, to have continued among the sheepfolds: *neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me;* no ambitious projects filled his mind, nor did he affect to be wise above what is written, desiring to pry into the secrets of providence and grace, which are too deep for our shallow line to fathom. *Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child;* so far from proudly assuming state, or being of a turbulent spirit, he had at Saul's court ever shewed the greatest meekness and most harmless behaviour, and no more sought the honours, wealth, and greatness of the world, than a child the breast from which it hath been weaned. *Note;* (1.) Humility is the great ornament of every station. (2.) Proud looks shew a proud heart. (3.) To wade out of our depth, either in religion or learning, is dangerous. It is wisdom enough to know the way to heaven, without intruding into the arcana of God's counsels. (4.) A child-like spirit is the best symptom of a gracious heart.

2. He encourages others from his example to trust in the

P S A L. CXXXII.

David in his prayer commendeth unto God the religious care he had for the ark: his prayer at the removing of the ark, with a repetition of God's promises.

A Song of Degrees.

LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions:

2 How he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;

3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;

4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eye-lids,

5 Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephrath: we found it in the fields of the wood.

7 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.

8 Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.

9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.

10 For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.

11 The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

12 If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore.

13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.

14 This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.

16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

17 There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

18 His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

the Lord. *Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth, and for ever.* Many of the people might be impatient of Saul's government, and eager to see him on the throne; but he exhorts them to leave the matter to God, who in his own time would fulfil all his designs. *Note;* They who hope in Jesus, and wait for his salvation, may confidently expect to partake of it, not only in time but in eternity; and shall be sure to possess it, if they continue to live by faith in the Son of God.

P S A L. CXXXII.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת *Shiir hammangaloth.*] It is thought by the best commentators, that this psalm was written by Solomon when he built the temple, and fulfilled what was designed by his father David. See 2 Sam. vii. 10.

Ver. 1. Lord, remember David.] O Lord, remember to David all his solicitude. This, and the following verses, express the great solicitude and uneasiness which David gave himself: Remember to David, &c. i. e. "Put it to his account, and reward him for it." Mudge.

Ver. 6. We found, &c.] We find it in the territory, or fields of Jear.—*Ver. 7.* Let us come into his abodes, let us prostrate ourselves at his footstool. These, and the following verses, represent in so many different scenes the Psalmist and his company set out in quest of the ark; first hearing news of it at Ephrath, i. e. Bethlehem; then finding it at Kirjath-jearim; then exhorting the people to pay their adoration to Jehovah; then using the common form of addressing the ark when it was moved, as it was now going to its rest upon mount Sion, ver. 8. See 1 Chron. xiii. 6. Mudge.

Ver. 11. The Lord hath sworn, &c.] St. Peter has shewn us, that these words have their full accomplishment only in Christ, Acts, ii. 30.

Ver. 17. The horn of David, &c.] These are metaphors in frequent use. David should ever have in Jerusalem a horn flourishing, and a light or lamp burning: a horn is an emblem of sovereignty. As one horn dropped off, another should spring up: and his lamp should never be extinguished; in allusion to the ever-burning lamp of the temple. See Mudge. That this mystically refers to Christ, who in a peculiar manner is God's anointed, the Jews themselves confess.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The psalm opens with a prayer to God. *Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions;* which may be the words of David himself, pleading God's faithfulness, and looking for support under all his troubles; or of Solomon pleading the covenant established with his father, and his afflictions, his sufferings, or the toil and trouble he underwent in making preparations for the building of the temple; or his humility, which he so strongly expressed, 2 Sam. vii. 2. 18. It may refer also to the Messiah, as the church's prayer, that God would remember the covenant of grace established with him, and accept his sufferings and humiliation, in behalf of all true believers.

1. The Psalmist recites David's solemn vow; so earnestly bent was he on erecting a temple for the Lord, the mighty God of Jacob, whose protection he had so greatly experienced, that by an oath he bound his soul, either literally not to enter his house, or sleep on his bed, till he had fixed on the place where the temple of God should be erected;

P S A L. CXXXIII.

The benefit of the communion of saints.

A Song of Degrees of David.

BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant
it is for brethren to dwell together in

unity!

2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

or figuratively, as others interpret it, that he should enjoy no peace and satisfaction in any of his worldly comforts, till this grand affair was determined. At Ephratah or Shiloh the tabernacle had been heard of, for there formerly it had been placed; but now it was found in the fields of the wood at Kirjath-jearim: or this may be applied to the Messiah, the true tabernacle of God with men, who should be born at Bethlehem Ephratah, and be found in the fields of the wood, in a low and abject condition, Ezek. xvi. 5.; and wherever he is found, all true believers will take up their word and say, *We will go into his tabernacles*, the places of public worship, where this incarnate Lord manifests his presence, grace, and love, towards his people: *we will worship at his footstool*, as humble supplicants and dutiful subjects.

2. The Psalmist prays, [1.] That God would condescend to take up his residence in the place erected for his honour. *Arise, O Lord, into thy rest*, where he might fix his settled abode, and no more remove from place to place, as when in the tabernacle in the wilderness; *thou, and the ark of thy strength*; the figure of him who is mighty to save his faithful people, and their everlasting help and hope. [2.] That God's priests might be clothed with righteousness; in their preaching and practice adorning their high vocation and calling; and without this, their sacred function serves but to aggravate the guilt of their unfaithfulness. [3.] That all God's saints may shout for joy, as they did, 2 Sam. vi. 15. and as all true believers continue to do, while they behold the glory of the Lord Jesus, and hear his gospel dispensed by a faithful, zealous, and exemplary ministry. [4.] For himself he prays, *For thy servant David's sake*, in consequence of the covenant established with him, *turn not away the face of thine anointed*; be gracious to Solomon, anointed to sit on his throne. This may be regarded also as the believer's prayer in general, who is anointed with an unction from the Holy One; and for Jesus's sake, the spiritual David, expects and prays for the light of God's countenance and regard.

2dly, The great and precious promises here delivered, were not designed for the men of that generation only, but are equally applicable to us under our higher dispensation. We have,

1. The unchangeable oath of God, confirming to David the kingdom of Israel, and to his successors. *Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne*; not only Solomon, but that glorious successor the Lord Jesus, Acts, ii. 30. whose kingdom should be an everlasting kingdom.

2. The condition on which David's posterity shall possess the throne of Israel, is, their fidelity: while they continue true to God's law, he will shew them the faithfulness of his promise. This they soon violated, and consequently lost the earthly throne. Let us take warning, lest we fall short of the celestial throne.

3. God's choice of Zion for his abode. There he fixed his residence in the temple, the figure of the gospel church, where he continues to dwell; and in every faithful soul, in the most blessed sense, is this verified, *This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it*. Lord, in my heart thus take up thy blest abode!

4. The rich promises that he makes to his Zion, [1.] Plenty shall bless the land: so abundant the provision, that even the poor shall eat and be satisfied: but richer far the provision of his grace in his church, where all who hunger and thirst after righteousness may come and be filled, and the poorest and most miserable sinner shall not go empty away, but find pardon, grace, and salvation, liberally provided for and bestowed upon him in Jesus Christ. [2.] He engages fully to answer the prayer which was made, ver. 9. to clothe the priests with salvation, and to give joy to all his saints; and this he does still, when he sends forth into the ministry men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, by whose labours the knowledge of salvation is diffused, and the children of God, enlightened by their preaching, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and the glorious gospel of his grace. [3.] He promises to strengthen the house of David. *There will I make the horn of David to bud*; a successor shall be given him, whose throne shall be greater than his father's: *I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed*, that his light may never be extinguished, but his posterity continue. *His enemies will I clothe with shame*, their devices disappointed, and themselves vanquished: *but upon himself shall his crown flourish!* all which, in the most eminent sense, is true, and applicable to that Son of David, who should be the horn of salvation to all believers, Luke, i. 69. saving them with a mighty salvation: a lamp ever burning, the light of the world, the sun of righteousness shining for ever and ever in the firmament of grace, according to God's most gracious purpose. All his enemies must sooner or later be clothed with shame; either the shame of penitents, returning to him in deep humiliation; or the shame of criminals, led forth to execution, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire: his crown must for ever flourish, he shall reign not only till all his enemies are fallen, but to the days of eternity; and, what is the joy of the faithful, he will make them kings with himself, and they shall reign with him in eternal glory.

P S A L. CXXXIII.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְדָוִד *Shiir hammangaloth ledavid.*] This psalm is thought to have been written by David upon the agreement of the other tribes with that of Judah, after Abalom's rebellion. It was very fitly used after the captivity, when the remainder of the tribes, formerly separated under Rehoboam, united themselves with the tribe of Judah; and quietly lived under the same common government. Bishop Patrick says, it was as fitly used by the first Christians,

3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew for there the LORD commanded the blessing, that descended upon the mountains of Zion : even life for evermore.

Christians, to express their joy for the blessed union of Jews and Gentiles; and may now serve the uses of all Christian societies, whose happiness consists in holy peace and concord.

Ver. 1. Behold, how good, &c.] Mr. Fenwick reads it, *Behold, how sweet and good it is, &c.—Ver. 2. Sweet as that precious ointment, &c.—Ver. 3. Refreshing as that Hermon dew, &c.*

Ver. 2. It is like the precious ointment, &c.] This verse is explained by Exod. xxx. 23, &c. where God gave directions concerning the ointment which was to anoint Aaron and his sons. It was to be composed of several rich spices, which, by being rightly tempered and mixed together, yielded a most fragrant odour, and thus became a most expressive emblem of an unanimous and well cemented society; all jointly conspiring, and in strict friendship contributing, according to their various capacities, tempers, and conditions, to the good and welfare of the whole. Dr. Hammond, and after him Mr. Johnson, carry this comparison further, and suppose that the anointing oil being said to go down to the skirts of Aaron's cloathing, implies that unity is a blessing to the subject, as well as the governor; to the meanest person in the society, as well as the greatest. This is certainly a truth; but it may be questioned whether it was intended by the Psalmist to be here implied. The former part of the comparison is beautiful and elegant; and in general it may not be proper to expect that every circumstance of a simile mentioned in scripture should hold good throughout. Mons. Fleury has well observed, that the resemblance generally falls upon some one single circumstance; and the rest are added, not as parts of the comparison, but to give some agreeable and natural image of the thing from whence the comparison is taken. He produces as a remarkable instance Solomon's Song, ch. vi. 6.

Ver. 3. Upon the mountains of Zion] Bishop Hare supposes this to be Sirion, which was a part of Anti-Libanus, and near to mount Hermon: but it is plain from Deut. iv. 48. that Hermon was also called Zion; Hermon being the general name of a chain of mountains, or rather of one large mountain, with several lesser ones belonging to it. The hills of Zion here mentioned, were probably situated on the lower parts of Hermon; from whence the dew flowed down upon them. The verb and preposition which are used for the dew's flowing down from Hermon upon the hills of Zion, are the same with those which are used for the oil's flowing down upon Aaron's vestments, which shews the descent to be from a higher place to a lower. The want of rain in this country, which very rarely falls but at certain seasons, is supplied by very large dews: these are absolutely necessary for the cultivation of the country, especially the hilly and mountainous parts of it, the soil of which is very dry and hot. This gives light to the Psalmist's expression, who intimates that unity and concord are to the full as necessary to the well-being of any regular state, as the dew is necessary to the nourishment of the corn upon the mountains of Asia. Mr. Maundrell says, when he lodged in this country, he was suffi-

ciently instructed by experience what the holy Psalmist means by the *dew of Hermon*; their tents being as wet with it as if it had rained all night.

For there the Lord commanded, &c.] That is, "For in that place, in that holy mountain, God had promised to bless all his devout worshippers, who shall unanimously resort thither from all parts of the land with an affluence of all good things (See Pf. cxxxii. 13. 18.); and not only with an abundance of all temporal good things, but especially with long life, as an earnest of endless felicity: *life for evermore.*" Mr. Green is of opinion, that there should be a full stop after Zion, and that *there* refers to the dwelling of those who live together in unity: "There, upon the happy dwelling of those," &c. This is the principal subject of the psalm. Bishop Lowth is of opinion, that *there* must necessarily be referred to Zion, and that there is nothing else to which it can possibly be referred; but this learned writer did not observe that Zion is only mentioned incidentally; and that it could not mean Zion in Jerusalem, because that is always called *the hill of Zion*; not *the hills of Zion*, in the plural. See his 25th Prelection, at the end. We cannot refuse our readers the following short and agreeable comment upon this psalm by Dr. Delaney: which, says he, contains an exhortation to unity, beginning in the prince, and diffused through the people, illustrated by two images, the most apt and beautiful that ever were imagined. Kingdoms are considered as bodies politic, of which the king is the head, and the people, in their several ranks and orders, the parts and members. A spirit of union beginning upon the prince, whose person is sacred, is like oil poured upon the head of Aaron, which naturally descends and spreads itself over all the parts of the body, and diffuses beauty and fragrance over the whole, reaching even to the skirts of the garment. Oil is without question the finest emblem of union that ever was conceived. It is a substance consisting of very small parts, which yet by their mutual adhesion constitute one uniform, well-united, and useful body. The sacred oil carries the idea and the advantage of union still further; which, being extracted from various spices, yet made up one well-cohering and more valuable compound. The next image carries the exhortation to union, and the advantages of it, yet higher. Hermon was the general name of one mountain, comprehending many lesser and lower hills, under the furround of a greater. Union, in any nation, is the gift of God; and therefore unity among brethren beginning from the king, is like the dew of heaven, which, falling first upon the higher summit of Hermon, refreshing and enriching wherever it falls, naturally descends to Zion a lower, and thence even to the humble vallies. Zion was the centre of union to all the tribes; there God himself had promised his people rest and peace from their enemies; which however were of little value without union and harmony among themselves. Life of David, book iv. chap. 14.

REFLECTIONS.—Among the deadliest evils that have befallen the church of God, we may justly reckon the divisions,

P S A L. CXXXIV.

An exhortation to bless God.

A Song of Degrees.

BEHOLD, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD.

2 Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.

3 The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

divisions, disputes, and animosities, which have from time to time so grievously rent it, disfigured its beauty, and destroyed its peace. O that we had passed at last the waters of strife, and begun to taste the blessedness of loving one another out of a pure heart fervently. We have first,

1. The practice recommended, as *brethren to dwell together in unity*; for all God's children have one father, one inheritance, one interest, one pursuit, one home, and therefore should have one heart and one mind, united in the same worship, affectionate in their regards, bearing and forbearing, forgiving and forgetting, and only jealous who shall shew the most abundant meekness, charity, and kindness to each other.

2. The blessedness of this conduct. *Behold how good, God approves and delights in it: and how pleasant, it is its own reward. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments*, which was composed of the sweetest spices, distilled the most grateful fragrance, and caused the countenance to shine in beauty. Such an unction from the Holy One have they received who have this brotherly love shed abroad in their hearts; in the eyes of God and men they shine; this sweet favour of Christ in them is most pleasing, and without it all our doings in God's sight are nothing worth. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. It is as *the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion*, that allays the heat of the scorching sun, and fertilizes the soil; thus doth charity seek to cool the heat of bigotry and angry dispute, dissueth its gentle influences, and sweetly insinuates into the minds of the exasperated, producing the happy fruits of peace and union; and wherever this temper perseveringly dwells, there God's blessing abides, *for there the Lord commanded the blessing*; every blessing the soul can need, and which at his command instantly descends, *even life for evermore*, with God and in God; that life of love begun on earth, the earnest and the foretaste of eternal blessedness. Lord, shed abroad this love in our hearts!

P S A L. CXXXIV.

Title. שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת *Shiir hammangaloth.*] It is not known by whom this psalm was composed; but it seems to have been designed to be sung at the shutting up of the gates of the temple: the two first verses by the high priest, to excite the priests and Levites, whose turn it was to watch that night, to be diligent in their office of singing psalms, and making devout prayers for the people;

P S A L. CXXXV.

An exhortation to praise God for his mercy, for his power, and for his judgments. The vanity of idols. An exhortation to bless God.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD.

2 Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God.

3 Praise ye the LORD; for the LORD is good:

and the last verse by those priests and Levites who there prayed for God's blessing upon him who had thus admonished them of their duty.

Ver. 1. Which stand] That is, *minister*: So the word is used, Deut. x. 8. xviii. 7. See also Lev. viii. 35. 1 Sam. iii. 3. &c.

Ver. 3. Bless thee] i. e. the high priest, or perhaps the precentor, or some one of the priests who was superior to the rest, and who had sung the two foregoing verses. *Out of Zion*, means, "from the ark, which is placed here, in this temple upon mount Zion, where Jehovah hath his special residence."

REFLECTIONS.—In the courts of the tabernacle, the Levites kept constant watch and ward night and day; and in these hours of their attendance the Psalmist directs them,

1. How to employ their time in blessing, praises, and prayer to God, the happy occupation of all God's faithful people, who delight in the courts of his sanctuary, ceaseless watch unto prayer, and in every thing give thanks.

2. They thank and pray for him who gives them this good advice; *the Lord, that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Zion*. Or these words may be considered as an encouragement to engage their praises, because the Lord out of Zion *shall bless thee*, returning in blessings upon themselves the praises they offered up to him. *Note*: They who wait upon God shall find the blessedness of his service; he will bless us, and we need nothing more than a continuance of his blessings to make us happy, now and for evermore.

P S A L. CXXXV.

IT has been conjectured, that this was the morning hymn, which the precentor called upon the Levites to sing at opening the gates of the temple, as the former was sung at the shutting up of the gates in the evening. Some imagine from ver. 13. compared with Exod. xii. 14. that it was a paschal hymn, and the contents of the psalm seem to countenance that opinion.

Ver. 3. Praise ye the Lord, &c.] Praise the Lord, for it is good; strike up to the name of the Lord, for it is cheerful. Mudge.

Ver. 5. Above all gods] That is, "Infinitely superior to all those imagined deities which other nations worship as their gods." Mudge renders the first clause, *yes, I myself have experienced that the Lord, &c.* and he observes, that *אני*, seems to have an emphasis, to shew that the

sing praises unto his name; for *it is pleasant*.

4 For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, *and* Israel for his peculiar treasure.

5 For I know that the LORD *is* great, and *that* our LORD *is* above all gods.

6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

7 He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.

8 Who smote the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast.

9 *Who* sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.

10 Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings.

11 Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan:

12 And gave their land *for* an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.

13 Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever, *and* thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.

14 For the LORD will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.

15 The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

16 They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not;

17 They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there *any* breath in their mouths.

18 They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusteth in them.

19 Bless the LORD, O house of Israel: bless the LORD, O house of Aaron:

20 Bless the LORD, O house of Levi; ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.

21 Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

author had experienced the divine power, perhaps in arming or controuling the elements in his favour.

Ver. 7. He causeth the vapours to ascend, &c.] Dr. Rufel, in his description of the weather at Aleppo in September, tells us, that seldom a night passes without much lightning in the north-west quarter, but not attended with thunder; and that when this lightning appears in the west or south-west points, it is a sure sign of the approaching rain, which is often followed with thunder. This last clause he afterwards explains by telling us, that though in the year 1746 it begun to be cloudy on the fourth of September, and continued so for a few days, and even thundered, yet, as rain fell till the 11th, &c.—which shews that his meaning was, that the lightning in the west or southwest points, which is often followed with thunder, is a sure sign of the approach of rain. A squall of wind, and clouds of dust, are the usual forerunners of these first rains. Most of these things are taken notice of in the present passage, and in Jer. x. 13. and li. 16. and serve to illustrate them. The Doctor's account determines, I think, that the **נִשְׁמָה** *nesim*, which our translators render *vapours*, must mean, as they elsewhere translate the word, *clouds*. It shews that God *maketh lightnings for the rain*: those in the west and south-west points are at Aleppo the sure prognostics of rain. The squalls of the wind bring on these refreshing showers, and are therefore *precious things* of the treasuries of God; and when he thunders, it is the *noise of waters* in the heavens. How graphically do the prophets describe the autumnal rains, which God brings on the earth after the drought of summer, and how much greater energy appears in these words after we have gained an

acquaintance with the weather in the East, than before. See *Observations*, &c. p. 41.

Ver. 9. Tokens] That is, demonstrations of his power. Mudge and Green render it *signs*.

Ver. 13. Thy memorial] See Exod. xii. 14. Mudge says, *memorial* is but another word for *name*; and both of them mean the same as *being, existence*.

Ver. 14. The Lord will judge] *The Lord will do justice to his people, and have compassion on his servants.* Houb. and Mudge.

Ver. 21. Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, &c.] *Blessed be the Lord in Zion.* Green. *The Lord of Zion.* Mudge.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, This psalm is full of praise: and, that the servants of God may never want matter for their songs, the Psalmist suggests,

1. His great goodness. *He is good* to all his creatures, especially to all true believers, who are peculiarly bound to praise him for the riches of his grace manifested to their souls.

2. The delightfulness of the service. *It is pleasant*: no pleasure indeed can equal a sense of the Divine love, warm upon the soul, and bursting forth in grateful acknowledgments to him who hath shed it abroad in our hearts.

3. The distinguishing privileges of God's Israel, and the obligations thence arising. *For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.* God's believing people are those in whom he delights, as men do in their treasuries; most bounden therefore are they in love and duty to adore him for his mercy.

2dly,

P S A L. CXXXVI.

An exhortation to give thanks to God for particular mercies.

O GIVE thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

2 O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

3 O give thanks to the LORD of lords: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

4 To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

5 To him that by wisdom made the heavens; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

6 To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy *endureth* for

ever.

7 To him that made great lights: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

8 The sun to rule by day: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

9 The moon and stars to rule by night; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

10 To him that smote Egypt in their first-born: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

11 And brought out Israel from among 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 To him which divided the Red Sea into parts: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

2dly, The greatness, as well as the goodness of God, opens a large field for his people's praises: this is here intreated upon,

1. In general. *I know that he is great* in his adorable perfections, and all the wonders of his power, manifested in the works of creation and providence; yea, there is neither measure nor end of his greatness, it surpasses all created understanding; *our Lord is above all gods*; whether the idols of the heathen, the kings of the earth, or the mighty angels, none can compare with him; they are less than nothing and vanity before him; his power is universal, what he wills he doeth in heaven or earth, without controul.

2. In particular instances, [1.] The rain, lightning, and winds, own his government. By his established order in the course of nature, the heat of the sun causes the exhalations to ascend and float in clouds; according to their different natures, these kindle in the air and flash in lightning; and those, becoming too ponderous, fall in drops of rain: out of his treasuries the winds issue, commanded by him when and where to blow, from what point, how long, how violently; all are his creatures, and wait and obey his orders. [2.] His people saw his greatness marvellously manifested to them in the plagues of Egypt, the death of the first-born, the ruin of Pharaoh, the defeat of the Amorites, their conquest of Canaan, and their peaceable possession of that good land. *Note*; Greater conquests, and a nobler possession, are ensured to God's spiritual and faithful Israel, and therefore they are bound to praise their mighty Lord and Saviour.

3. God's faithful people will feel the everlasting effects of his goodness and greatness: he is for ever the same: to latest ages the faithful shall prove his power and his love, the memorial of which will be transmitted from one generation to another, and confirmed still by the experience of the preceding. *For the Lord will judge his people*, rule over them, preserve, protect them, plead their cause against their enemies, and at the last day crown his faithful ones with glory; *and will repent himself concerning his servants*; if he chastises them for a while, he will on their sincere return change his method of procedure with them, and turn their mourning into joy; or, *he will be intreated for*

his servants, being gracious to hear and grant their prayer; or, *he will comfort himself concerning his servants*, delighting in their prosperity, and watching over them for good: and happy the people who are in such a case!

3dly, The Psalmist,

1. Pours contempt on the vanities of the heathen, and on their worshippers: their idols, though made of the most precious metals, were the creatures of their own hands, senseless, and unable to hear or answer the prayers of their stupid votaries, who trusted in them, and thereby proved themselves as void of understanding as the stock they adored.

2. He encourages the house of Israel to praise and trust in their God, the only living and true God, who deserved their highest thanksgivings, and was able to save them to the uttermost: the people in general, the ministers of the sanctuary in particular, and all that fear the Lord, Jews and profelytes, assembled in Zion, must join to bless his name, so good, so great; and render him that tribute which they so deeply owed. *Note*; The greatness and goodness of our God will be the everlasting song of the faithful, and eternity shall never be able to exhaust the subject.

P S A L. CXXXVI.

THIS psalm, like the former, is a commemoration of the wonderful things which God had done for the Jews. Bishop Patrick supposes it to have been intended for the use of their solemn festivals; as it was called by the Jews, הלל הגדול *hallel baggadol*, the great thanksgiving. He observes upon the frequent repetition of the half verse, that this was done to make them more sensible that they owed all they had to the divine bounty; to excite them to depend entirely upon that bounty, and to rest assured that it would never fail them, if they piously and sincerely acknowledged it. This form of acknowledgment, *for his mercy*, &c. was prescribed by David to be used continually in the divine service, 1 Chron. xvi. 41. followed by Solomon, 2 Chron. vii. 3. 6. and observed by Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 21. See Bishop Lowth's 29th Prelection.

Ver. 5. To him that by wisdom made the heavens] Namely, so as to move in their constant vicissitude, and regular order.

14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

16 To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

17 To him which 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, the king of Bashan: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

21 And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

22 *Even* an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

23 Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

25 Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

Ver. 15. But overthrew Pharaoh] But shook off Pharaoh, &c. This translation gives an image of locusts. They fell into the sea like a swarm of locusts. See Mudge.

Ver. 23. Who remembered us in our low estate] It is not easy to translate otherwise. But as the original is *לָנוּ* *lanu*, to us, it means that God remembered *in their favour*; remembered to them what was past, and his covenant made with their forefathers; *In their low estate*, when they were severely afflicted for their sins, and in danger of being thrown out of the good land into which he had brought them. See Judges, chap. ii, iii, iv.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Repeated calls are needful for us, who are so backward to the work of praise. The object of our praise is Jehovah, the God of gods, the Lord of lords; transcendently great and glorious, whom angels and men adore: and most worthy is he to be praised.

1. Because *he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.* This is his most delightful attribute; mercy in an overflowing stream descends from him the fountain, and all his faithful people will prove it so eternally.

2. Because *he alone doth great wonders:* in heaven above his wisdom appears; vast the work, stupendous the contrivance, amazing the execution, in order, beauty, proportion, formed with exactest harmony, the sun to rule the day, the moon and stars the night, in regular succession: and his wonder-working hand is seen in earth beneath, rising above the waters, and garnished with every necessary for man and beast, and this because his mercy endureth for ever, as in his works of creation and providence abundantly appears; and therefore he claims, from all, continual adoration, love, and praise.

2dly, From general mercies, of which all alike partake, the Psalmist passes on to the peculiar instances of God's regard to his believing people, from whom he expects a peculiar tribute of praise, for spiritual mercies bestowed, as well as for the enduring mercy that he hath yet in store for the faithful: various instances of these are here mentioned.

1. Their deliverance from Egypt, wrought with a stretched-out arm, after the most awful plagues executed

on their oppressors; which closed with that most terrible judgment the death of their first-born. Yet more enduring are his mercies still towards all his spiritual and faithful children, who have in Jesus Christ a greater deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan, and eternal redemption from all the powers of evil.

2. Their passage through the Red Sea, divided by miraculous power, to let them safely through, then closing with tremendous roar on their pursuers, and overwhelming them under its mighty waters: and such mercy for ever shall the faithful find; in all their trials he will open them a way through a stormy world, bring them safe to the shore of eternal rest, and from thence enable them to look back on all their enemies, destroyed for ever, as these Egyptians on the shore.

3. Forty years he led them through the wilderness, and fed them by repeated miracles; nor did repeated provocations stop the current of his favours to those who were faithful, *for his mercy endureth for ever.*

4. He brought them safe to the land of Canaan, after subduing mighty kings and their armies before them, according to the promise made unto their fathers, that they might see how astonishing his mercies were, and be engaged to trust in them for ever. A better land is prepared for God's faithful persevering children; and through grace, amidst all the opposition of their spiritual enemies, they shall be preserved to this everlasting kingdom, where to eternity they will acknowledge that his mercy endureth for ever.

3dly, The more we reflect, the more cause we shall find to praise God's amazing mercy and love.

1. For his grace in redemption. *He remembered us in our low estate, and redeemed us from our enemies;* many a time he rescued the Jewish people from their bonds, when most oppressed; but he hath done infinitely more for his spiritual and faithful Israel; when sunk under guilt, corruption, misery, at the gate of the grave, and ready to sink into the belly of hell, he hath ransomed us by his blood, raised us from our state of sin and death, and will save every persevering believer with an everlasting salvation. Praise the Lord, O my soul!

2. For his kind provision. *He giveth food to all flesh;*

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P S A L. CXXXVII.

The constancy of the Jews in captivity. The prophet curseth Edom and Babel.

BY the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.

2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us *required of us mirth, saying*, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

4 How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?

5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget *her cunning*.

6 If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

7 Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, *Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof*.

8 O daughter of Babylon, who art to be de-

the meanest reptile partakes of his care in common with the greatest of his creatures; he openeth his hand, and they are filled with good; for his mercy is over all his works.

3. For all this are we most deeply obliged to give thanks unto the God of heaven; all other creatures on earth want the power to speak his praise; from man alone that tribute is expected, as the tongue of this lower world, and as the peculiar object of that mercy which endureth for ever.

P S A L. CXXXVII.

THIS melancholy song, says Mr. Mudge, was composed by one of the captives, just upon their coming to Babylon: In it the author remembers his country with great affection, and the enemies of it, particularly Edom and Babylon, with much sacred indignation. It has been thought that Jeremiah composed this psalm, and sent it to the captives of Babylon upon hearing of the scorn wherewith their insulting enemies treated them in that strange land; which, he here foretels, God would severely punish by the hands of some other cruel people, who would shew them as little mercy as they had shewn the Israelites. I should rather think for my own part, that the psalm was written by one of the captives on the spot, than by Jeremiah; and I cannot help favouring Mr. Bedford's idea, who supposes that the writer was the prophet Ezekiel; placing the date of it in the year 583 before Christ. See his *Scrip. Chronol.* p. 710.

Ver. 1. By the rivers of Babylon, &c.] They seem to be just then resting themselves after the fatigue of their captivity, when they were called upon to sing one of their country songs. This they refused; and, instead of gratifying such an insulting request, hanged their harps upon the willows which grew in the province of Babylon. St. Chrysostom thinks, that, at the beginning of their captivity, the Jews were dispersed all along several rivers in the country, and not suffered to dwell in the towns of the province of Babylon. Bishop Patrick has followed him in this: and he supposes that the *waters, or rivers of Babylon*, are here mentioned as a circumstance which aggravated their distress; nay, it is supposed by some, that they were employed in draining the marshy parts of the country: But it seems more probable, that no part of their distress consisted in this circumstance, but in their reflecting upon Zion; indeed, their

being seated by rivers of waters may equally well be considered as a circumstance in their favour. Mr. Johnson says, the captive Jews were obliged to dwell in the watery marshy parts of Babylon, and refers to Ezekiel, i. 1. to prove it. But Ezekiel only says, *The word of the Lord came to him as he was among the captives by the river Chebar*; and this river is thought by the best judges to be in Mesopotamia, the soil whereof being dry and sandy, the vicinity of a river must certainly be deemed an agreeable circumstance. This allowed, it seems to heighten the beauty of the psalm, if we imagine the person here speaking was endeavouring to amuse and divert himself, at least to soothe his melancholy with his instrument. But the reflection on the loss of Zion, cast such a damp over him, that he was obliged to desist from his purpose. He unstrung his harp; he laid it by as useless, while tears flowed from him instead of melody. In one word, the thought here appears to be much the same with that of Isaiah's in his prophetic description of this captivity, ch. xxiv. 7, 8. *All the merry-hearted do sigh; the mirth of tabrets ceaseth; the noise of them that rejoice endeth; the joy of the harp ceaseth.*

Ver. 3. And they that wasted us, &c.] Mudge renders this clause, *And our destroyers' mirth.*

Ver. 5, 6. Let my right hand forget her cunning, &c.] There is nothing for *her cunning* in the original. The plain meaning is, "*May my right hand forget to play upon the harp; may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; disabling me from singing, if I prefer not, or according to the original, if I advance not Jerusalem in the beginning of my joy;*" that is, "If again I sing any such festival songs, till that joyful day shall come, when I shall see Jerusalem and her holy solemnities restored."

Ver. 7. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom] "Who instead of pitying Jerusalem, as became neighbours and relations, were glad to see the day of its desolations." The time when God's judgments are executed, is frequently called, emphatically, *the day*. See Obad. ver. 12, 13, 15. and Pl. xxxvii. 13. The Edomites, who thus rejoiced at the desolations of Jerusalem, were the descendants of Esau. See Ezek. xxv. 12. And for this their malicious joy, God's judgments came upon them. See Jer. xlix. 7, &c.

Ver. 8, 9. O daughter of Babylon, &c.] *O daughter of Babylon, the destroyed;* [not *Babylon the proud*, as she now is; but *Babylon the destroyed*, for so she certainly shall be, when

stroyed; happy *shall be he*, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

9 Happy *shall be he*, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

when it comes to her turn;] *How happy be that shall*, &c. The sense is, "God will give a prosperous success to the Persians and Medes, against the Babylonians or Chaldeans." See Jer. l. 9. 41. Isai. xiii. 19, &c. It has been objected, that the imprecations in these verses against Babylon do not well comport with God's directions to his captive people to pray for the peace of Babylon. Jer. xxix. 7. But here we must distinguish between the ordinary rule of practice and the extraordinary commissions given to prophets: The Psalmist was a prophet, and wrote by the special direction of the Holy Spirit; while the common people of Israel, and prophets also in their private capacity, were to follow the ordinary rule of praying for those very enemies whose destruction was coming on, but in God's own time. In the mean while the safety of the Jewish captives depended upon the safety of Babylon, and was wrapped up in it; and so it concerned them both in point of duty and interest to submit peaceably and quietly to their new masters, and to pray for their prosperity: notwithstanding all which, they might justly hope for a deliverance at the seventy years' end; and God might instruct his prophets to declare it before-hand, together with the manner of it. Isaiah had prophesied of the destruction of Babylon above 150 years before, and in terms not unlike what we find in this psalm. He had said, chap. xiii. 16. *Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes.* The Psalmist further adds, that the instrument under God in punishing Babylon shall be *happy*; shall be blessed, and praised in his deed; as having done a glorious work in executing the divine justice upon her, and at the same time rescuing and delivering the people of God. This prophecy or denunciation was fulfilled, as we remarked, by the Medes and Persians, under the conduct of Cyrus the servant and chosen of God: and now what harm could there be in the Psalmist's presignifying in a pathetic style these high and marvellous things? Certainly the ordinary rule to go by is, *Bless, and curse not*; a rule so sacred, that men are effectually tied up from all curfings of their own; and have no power left in that case, except it be to declare God's curses, and those general only, or in the very words of Scripture. See Numb. xxiii. 8. As to any thing more special, God seems to have reserved it to his own special directions; which have ceased long ago, ever since prophecies have ceased. See Waterland's *Script. Vind.* part iii. p. 28.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, This psalm is the composition of a mournful muse; and while we meditate thereon, scarcely can the sympathetic heart forbear to mingle her tears with those of the afflicted captives. We have,

1. Their mournful condition. *By the rivers of Babylon, far from the gates of Zion, under a heavy yoke, either employed in servile labours near these streams, or stealing thither sadly to muse on their wretched state, we sat down, yea we wept, indulging their melancholy reflections, and swelling the torrent with their tears, when we remembered thee, O Zion; Zion, Zion, arose before their eyes, her pa-*

laces in smoky ruins lay, her temple in heaps, her altars overturned, her sacrifices ceased, and fullen silence reigned in the once-thronged gates: such desolations pierced their hearts with anguish, while deep reflection on their sins, the cause of all, called forth still bitterer sorrows; their instruments of music on willows hung neglected by, their hearts untuned, their harps unstrung, and all their songs turned into sighs and groans.

2. Their oppressors insulted over them; not content with plundering their substance, and enslaving their persons, they required songs from their heavy hearts; and, scoffing at the songs of Zion, would turn these sacred services into profane mirth. *Note;* (1.) It is doubly cruel to insult the afflicted. (2.) The songs of Zion have often been the butt of scoffers' wit; but God is not mocked, he is jealous and avengeth.

3. Their reply. *How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?* These sacred songs ill-suited the company of the profane; nor ought these holy things to be given to dogs; better exasperate their masters by a refusal, than anger their God by sinful compliance.

4. Their rooted affection to Jerusalem. Deeply engraven on their hearts, nor time, nor distance, banished the loved image from their thoughts; they longed to be there, they hoped the time was near, and ceaseless thitherward directed their faces and their prayers; they preferred it to their chief joy; all personal prosperity and comfort were nothing so near or dear to them as the interest of Zion: much rather therefore did they wish to forget their skill in music, or that their withered arm might shrink, and their tongue cleave to the roof of their mouth, than forget the city of their solemnities, cease to remember her with honour and delight, or dare by base compliances to entertain the sons of Babylon, or serve their gods, with Zion's sacred music. *Note;* (1.) The interests of Christ's church and kingdom will be ever dearer to his people than their own. (2.) When the path of duty is clear, however dangerous, we are called to steadfast adherence to it; better lose our limbs or life than lose our souls.

2dly, Not revenge, but zeal for God's glory, dictates these desires.

1. Edom's malice in the day of Jerusalem's affliction was cruel; they sharpened the Chaldeans' fury, and wished them to raze the city and temple to their foundations: for this, a complaint is lodged against them with that God who is the avenger of his people's wrongs, and they shall not go unpunished. The persecutors of God's people will assuredly be reckoned with, and every hard speech against them be remembered in the day of recompence.

2. The doom of Babylon is read. *O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed;* such is the divine decree, and nothing can prevent its execution: *happy shall be he that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us;* as Cyrus did, when, executing the counsels of God, he entered that devoted city, and retaliated on them the cruelty they had shewn their captives. *Happy shall be he that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones;* and as Babylon thus fell of old,

P S A L. CXXXVIII.

David praiseth God for the truth of his word: he propheseth that the kings of the earth shall praise God: he professeth his confidence in God.

A Psalm of David.

I WILL praise thee with my whole heart; before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

2 I will worship towards thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me *with* strength in my soul.

4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great *is* the glory of the LORD.

6 Though the LORD *be* high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

8 The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

Babylon mystical shall meet the same destruction from the righteous judgment of God, and all antichristian oppressors of God's church and people sink as a millstone cast into the sea, and never rise up again.

P S A L. CXXXVIII.

Title. לְדָוִד *ledavid*] This psalm, though first composed by David, as a thankful acknowledgment of God's goodness to him in advancing him from a low and afflicted condition to the royal dignity, yet was afterwards, as we may gather from the Septuagint translation, made use of by Haggai and Zechariah at the rebuilding of the temple.

Ver. 1, 2. Before the gods] We have shewn, that the word אֱלֹהִים *elohim*, here rendered *gods*, signifies either angels or princes, judges or rulers; in either of which senses it may be taken in this place. Houbigant however renders it, *Before God will I sing unto thee*; meaning, "in thy presence, or before thy sacred oracle, I will sing thy praises;" and the next verse seems to countenance his opinion; for, *towards thy holy temple*, may be rendered, *towards the palace of thy holiness*; i. e. the sanctuary and the mercy-seat. See Ps. xcix. 5. *For thou hast magnified thy name*, means, "Thyself, and thy attributes;" and by magnifying his *word*, is meant, his making great and excellent promises, and then punctually performing them. How God's *word*, or truth, or promise, was fulfilled to David, see 1 Sam. xvi. 13. This clause might be better rendered, *Thou hast magnified above all things thy name, and thy word*. Houbigant has it, *For thou hast made thy word more excellent than all thy glory*.

Ver. 4. When they hear] Or, *For they shall hear*.

Ver. 5. Yea, they shall sing] *And shall sing of the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord*. "They shall make the ways of the Lord, his glorious acts, the subject of their songs; they shall say, that great is the glory, &c." to the end of the 6th verse; where *he knoweth afar off*, according to some, signifies, *estrangeth himself from them, and despiseth them*, though he knoweth them, since he knoweth all things, and will consequently punish them. But Mudge

renders the clause, *And descrieth the haughty from his distance*: "He seeth the lowly and the haughty, and distinguisheth them at the distance at which he sits exalted." See also Houbigant.

Ver. 7. Thou shalt stretch forth thine hand] *Thou wilt lay thy hand upon the fury of my enemies*; i. e. "Thou wilt keep it down, and restrain it." Mudge; who renders the first clause of the next verse, *The Lord will completely cover me all around*. The last words seem to put God in mind of his favour to the Jewish nation, and to pray that he would not leave unfinished what he had begun to do; perpetuating to all nations the great things which he had done for that nation.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, David's harp is continually in tune.

1. He resolves, with warm affection and simplicity of heart, to praise God, *before the gods*, in the presence of kings or magistrates, or the angels, with boldness, not ashamed to glory in his dependance upon God. *I will worship towards thy holy temple*; to the place of the ark did they always direct their faces, when assembled in the courts of the sanctuary, or worshipping in private. For the only prayers or praises which ascend with acceptance, are those which are offered with our eyes to him who is the true tabernacle, Jesus Christ, by whom we have access unto God.

2. Abundant cause he had for thanksgiving. *For thy loving-kindness*, manifested in all the temporal and spiritual blessings bestowed, and *for thy truth*, having experienced the faithfulness of his promises: *for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name*; great hath God's name appeared in the works of creation and providence, but greater in his word of grace, wherein the most transcendent displays of his glory are made: or this may refer to Christ, the essential word, who is exalted above every name, and in whom God's name is magnified, beyond all other revelations formerly made to his church. *In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me*, attentive to my prayer, and giving all I asked; and *strengthenedst me with strength in my soul*, that he was enabled to stand under the pressures of affliction and tempta-

P S A L. CXXXIX.

David praifeth God for his all-feeing providence, and for his infinite mercies: he defieth the wicked: he prayeth for fincerity.

To the chief mufician, A Pfalm of David.

O LORD, thou haft feached me, and known me.

2 Thou knoweft my down-fitting and mine up-rifing, thou underftandeft my thought afar off.

3 Thou compaffeft my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.

4 For *there is* not a word in my tongue, but lo, O LORD, thou knoweft it altogether.

5 Thou haft befet me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

6 *Such* knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

7 Whither fhall I go from thy fpirit? or whither fhall I flee from thy prefence?

temptation, and to overcome all his enemies; for which inextimable mercies he juftly owed the grateful return of praife. *Note;* (1.) They who trust God's truth will prove his faithfulnefs. (2.) When we fly to God in prayer, he will not leave us deftitute. (3.) In all our trials, if God ftrengthen us in our fouls, we fhall gain by our afflictions.

3. Others, even all the kings of the earth, fhall join his fongs, when, hearing the words of his mouth in the preaching of the gofpel, the fulnefs of the Gentiles fhall come in, and their kings become nurfing fathers, finging in the church of the good ways of the Lord, his mercy, grace, and love in a Redeemer, and afcribing to him the great glory which is his due. Haften it, O Lord, in its feafon!

2dly, This is either the fong which the kings of the earth fhould fing, or the Pfalmift's profefion of his confidence in God.

1. The humble he will regard, the proud he will deftroy, *Though the Lord be high* in glory, exalted above all bleffing and praife, yet *hath he refpect unto the lowly*, vile in their own eyes, confcious of their fin, weakness, and wretchednefs, and cafting themfelves wholly on the riches of God's grace in the Redeemer; thefe God regards with love, and delights to blefs: *but the proud*, who are puffed up with worldly advantages, or vain of their attainments in wifdom, or highly elated with the conceit of their own righteoufnefs; fuch doth God abhor: *he knoweth them afar off*, fees their inmoft foul, and will vifit them in his difpleafure.

2. The experience which the Pfalmift had of God's care, encourages his confidence to trust in him at all times. *Though I walk in the midft of trouble*, and that is often the bitter portion of the deareft faints of God, whom he is pleafed to exercife with afflictions, *thou wilt revive me* when ready to fink under the burden, *thou fhalt ftretch forth thine hand againft the wrath of mine enemies*, to refrain or deftroy them, and *thy right hand fhall fave me*, thy power and grace, or Chrift, the Right Hand of the Lord, the Saviour of all who trust in him. *The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me*; in his hands all the concerns of the faithful are fafe. *Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever*, and cannot difappoint any faithful foul that ever trusts thereon: *forfake not the works of thine own hands*, perfect the falvation of thy people; and as my foul is thine by creation, redemption, and grace, forfake me not, but love me to the end, that I may be thine for ever.

P S A L. CXXXIX.

Title. למנצח לדור מזמור lamnatfeach ledavid mizmor.] This pfalm is generally thought to have been compofed by David when he lay under the imputation of having evil defigns againft Saul: in which view, it is a folemn appeal to the divine omniprefence and omnifcience, for his innocence in that matter: the Pfalmift tacitly and elegantly intimating hereby, how foolifh as well as impious it would be for him to prevaricate and diffemble with a God, whose knowledge and power it was impoffible to elude. But it is Mr. Mudge's opinion, from the ftrong tincture of Chaldaifm in the pfalm, that it was written in or after the captivity. Be that as it may, the fentiments it contains are moft noble and elevated. There is a peculiar beauty and a fublimity in the representation of the divine attributes in it, which deferve particular attention. The pfalm begins with a devout contemplation of the omnifcience of God; not, indeed, exprefsly confidered in its utmoft extent, as it penetrates at once, with an exact and infallible comprehension, through the whole fcope of created nature, and reaches to the utmoft verge and limits of the univerfe: nor as, together with the prefent fystem and complete actual ftate of things, it has an intuitive and clear view of the paff, and conceives the moft obfcure and remote futurities, and all poffible natures and modes of exiftence; but as it particularly refpects mankind, and more immediately influences human morality and a ferious humble difcharge of all the duties of religion. O Lord! fays the Pfalmift, in a moft elevated ftain of thought and expreffion, *thou haft feached*, &c. to ver. 6. This thought impreffed upon his mind fuch a veneration and awe of the great Deity, the fountain and fupport of univerfal life and being, and he found his faculties fo fwallowed up, and as it were loft in meditating on fo deep and immense a fubject, that man's reafon, in its utmoft pride and glory, and with its moft boasted improvements and acquisitions of knowledge, feemed now fo debafed, fo weak, fo narrow, and, in comparifon with infinity, fo defpicable, that the author of this pfalm could proceed no further without expreffing his admiration at a boundlefs fcope of intelligence, which he could neither explain nor comprehend; and therefore he immediately adds; *ſuch knowledge*, &c. ver. 6. See Fofter's Difcourfes, vol. 1. 4to. p. 76.

Ver. 4. For there is not a word] Or, *When there is not a word in my tongue, O Lord, thou knoweft all.* But Mudge renders it, *For, before the word is in my tongue, behold, O Lord,*

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there : if I make my bed in hell, behold thou *art* *there*.

9 *If* I take the wings of the morning, and 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 say, Surely the darkness shall cover me ; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee ;

but the night shineth as the day : the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*.

13 For thou hast possessed my reins : thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise thee ; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made : marvellous *are* thy works ; and *that* my soul knoweth right well.

15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Lord, thou knowest the whole of it ; i. e. "Thou knowest the whole matter of what I am going to say, before the word is formed upon my tongue."

Ver. 6. Such knowledge is too wonderful, &c.] Grotius supposes the meaning to be, "Thy knowledge, or rather, thy omniscience, is so great, that it is impossible to escape or fly from it." Mr. Mann thinks that the 6th verse should be rendered thus: *Wonderful is thy knowledge, and elevated above me ; I cannot prevail against it :* From hence, says he, the Psalmist pursues the thought of God's omnipresence ; *Whither shall I go, &c.*

Ver. 7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, &c.] Though the Psalmist acknowledged the divine omniscience to be full of wonders, and a height to which no human, no finite understanding could possibly ascend ; yet he saw, at the same time, that it might be capable of the plainest and most convincing proofs ; and that there were really obvious and incontestable proofs of it in nature. And these, or at least the two general heads to which they are, in all their forms and variety of lights, reducible, he himself has in the subsequent part of the psalm distinctly mentioned, viz. God's being the contriver and author of the whole frame of things ; and his constant, essential, and intimate presence with the system of creation, and with every individual comprehended in it. The last of these the Psalmist introduces by way of inquiry ; how it was possible for any, if they were unnaturally inclined to it, and, from an utter darkness of their reason, and ignorance of the most important privileges and consolations of derived and dependant natures, *desirous* of it,—to fly from that vital and efficacious Spirit, which co-exists with, animates, and diffuses beauty, and order, and tendencies to happiness, throughout the whole of created being. "*Whither, says he, shall I go, &c.* Ver. 8. *If I ascend up into heaven, beyond which I cannot discern the most diminutive and contracted orbs of light,—thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, or could plunge myself into the most obscure and unknown mansions of the dead, and the worlds invisible, where even imagination loses itself in darkness, behold, thou art there.* Ver. 9. *If I take the wings of the morning, &c.* i. e. "If, with the swiftness of the rays of the rising sun, I could shoot myself in an instant to the uttermost parts of the western ocean, ver. 10, *even there shall thy hand lead me, &c.* i. e. I should still exist in God ; his presence would be diffused all around me ; his enlivening power would support my frame. Ver. 11, 12. *If I say, surely, &c.—The darkness and the light are both alike to thee ; Equally conspicu-*

ous am I, and all my circumstances, all my actions, under the thickest and most impenetrable shades of night, as in the brightest splendors of the noon-day sun. Ver. 13. For thou hast possessed my reins, &c." See Foster's Discourses, as above, and Job, xi. 8. Bishop Lowth observes, that the common interpretation of the 9th verse does not satisfy him. He thinks that the two members of this distich, like those of the former, are plainly opposed to each other : that a two-fold passage is expressed, one to the east, the other to the west ; and that the *distance* of the flight, not the *celerity* of it, is spoken of. "If I direct my wings towards the morning [or the east] ; If I dwell in the extremity of the western sea, &c." See his 16th and 29th Prelections.

Ver. 13. Thou hast possessed my reins, &c.] Or, *Thou hast formed my reins ; thou hast compacted me.*

Ver. 15. Curiously wrought] Bishop Lowth, speaking of *images* in the Hebrew poetry, taken from *things sacred*, has the following observation : "In that most perfect hymn, where the immensity of the Omnipresent Deity, and the admirable wisdom of the Divine Artificer in framing the human body, are celebrated, the poet uses a remarkable metaphor, drawn from the nicest tapestry work :

"When I was formed in secret ;

"When I was wrought, as with a needle, in the lowest parts of the earth.

"He who remarks this, (but the man who consults versions only will hardly ever remark it,) and at the same time reflects upon the wonderful composition of the human body, the various implication of veins, arteries, fibres, membranes, and 'the inexplicable texture' of the whole frame, will immediately understand the beauty and elegance of this most apt translation. But he will not attain the whole force and dignity, unless he also consider that the most artful embroidery with the needle was dedicated by the Hebrews to the service of the sanctuary ; and that the proper and singular use of this work was, by the immediate prescript of the divine law, applied in a certain part of the high-priest's dress, and in the curtains of the tabernacle. Exod. xxvi. 36. xxvii. 16. xxviii. 39. and compare Ezek. xiii. 18. xvi. 10. So that the Psalmist may well be supposed to have compared the wisdom of the Divine Artificer, particularly with that specimen of human art, whose dignity was, through religion, the highest, and whose elegance (Exod. xxxv. 30—35.) was so exquisite, "that

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.

17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

18 *If* I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.

20 For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take *thy name* in vain.

21 Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?

22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

“that the sacred writer seems to attribute it to a divine inspiration.” See his 8th Prelection. The expression, *in the lowest parts of the earth*, means no more, says Mr. Mudge, than *low down in the earth*, as opposed to that height of heaven, where God sits, and inspects and orders every thing. Some render the words, *In these lower regions of the earth*.

Ver. 16. Thine eyes did see my substance, &c.] Or, Thine eyes did see my rude mass; and on thy books were all written, as they were daily fashioned, when, &c. Before any of his limbs were in being, they were all written down, he says, in God’s book, and the very days upon which they were afterwards actually formed. Some think that the allusion to embroidery is here carried on. “As the embroiderer hath still his book or pattern before him, to which he always recurs; so, by a method as exact, were all my members in continuance fashioned; i. e. from the rude embryo, or mass, they daily received some degree of figuration, as, from the rude skeins of silk under the artificer’s hands, there at length arises an unexpected beauty, and an accurate harmony of colours and proportions: all those members lay open before God’s eyes, they were discerned by him as clearly as if the plan of them had been drawn in a book, even to the least figuration of the body of the child.”

*Ver. 17—19. How precious, &c.] This expresses the zeal and affection that he had for God. “As thou hast taken such care of me, so are the thoughts of thee precious to me above all things.” The turn of the sentence shews this to be the meaning:—“I am ever thinking of thee; as soon as I wake, I find thee still in my thoughts; I cannot bear the impious man; and, ye men of blood, depart from me.” Green renders the 17th verse, *How precious unto me, O God, are the thoughts of thee! How numerous are the subjects of them!**

Ver. 20. Take thy name in vain] Take thee to falsehood. “Take thee (thy name is generally expressed) only to swear falsely by thee.” Mudge.

Ver. 24. In the way everlasting] As God’s commandments are frequently said to be everlasting, the everlasting way, I suppose, says Mr. Mudge, means the way of God’s law, in opposition to the wicked way, or way of provocation; the idol worship of the heathen, which in its nature was false, corrupt, and perishing, had a beginning, and would have an end.

The diction of this psalm is so delicate, and the thoughts

throughout are so sublime, that they bespeak its royal author. It is a remark of Mous. Fleury’s, that in ver. 7. the Psalmist takes in the whole extent of the universe; and in ver. 8. uses a more noble figure to express the ubiquity of God; *If I take the wings of the morning, &c.* “To this,” continues our author, “he does not coolly say, “It would be in vain; or, as he said before, *thou art there*, “but he makes use of a finer and more elegant thought, “as of a man who accused himself of extreme folly, in “endeavouring to conceal himself from God.—So far “shall I be from flying from thy presence, that *even there* “also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold “me. Here the royal Psalmist seems to have exhausted “his imagination: but, behold a new and more studied “means of hiding himself from God: *If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me, then shall my night be “turned into day; still this is all folly and extravagance: “the darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear “as the day; the darkness and light to thee are both alike.* “Let the modern wits, after this, look upon the honest “shepherds of Palestine as a company of *rude and unpolished clowns*; let them, if they can, produce from profane authors thoughts which are more sublime, more delicate, or better turned: not to mention the sound “divinity and solid piety couched under these expressions!” See Dissert. on the Poetry of the Ancients. We shall conclude our notes on this noble psalm with a few brief remarks upon the omnipresence and omniscience of God. And, first, we may learn, that there can be no confusion, from the beginning to the end of things, to disturb and perplex the plan of his government, or to frustrate or impede its main design; because by his infinite understanding he perfectly knows, and being every where present, and infinitely the first power in the universe, is able to regulate all affairs, in all places, and at all times. Secondly, we learn that the whole universe may justly be considered as the temple of God, in every part of which he for ever resides; and consequently sincere adorations, praises, and prayers, may be rationally offered every where, and, when sincere, we have the highest reason to believe, will be graciously accepted through his Beloved Son. It appears from hence, farther, that God is perfectly qualified for being the Judge of the whole world; that no disguises can shelter from his eye; that all artifices and colourings of hypocrisy are vain; that circumspection of spirit, and regularity of conduct, are every where equally necessary;

P S A L. CXL.

David prayeth to be delivered from Saul and Doeg: he prayeth against them: he comforteth himself by confidence in God.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

DELIVER me, O LORD, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man;

necessary; and that, as far as we are conscious of our integrity, we may derive inward comfort from the contemplation of God's omniscience, however we may be suspected, slandered, vilified, and persecuted by the world; and that no good disposition, no generous purpose formed, though it was not in our power to execute it, none of our concealed and most secret virtues, shall miss of their due reward through the blood of the Covenant. Lastly, when actions and characters are of a mixed nature, the omniscient God knows infallibly how to separate the one part from the other; and among various principles which may jointly influence, to fix on the chief over-ruling principle which denominates the character; even when the mind of the agent may be too distrustful on the one hand, or too presumptuous and confident on the other: which to him should be a lesson of caution and self-examination; and to the world,—where some circumstances appear, that have a favourable aspect only,—a lesson against forward and uncharitable censures. The cognizance of the heart is subject to omniscience only: the heart is the true characteristic of virtue and vice; while outward, glaring, and seemingly incontestable evidences of both may be, in a great measure, fallacious. See Foster as above.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Naked and open are all things to him with whom we have to do. This truth the Psalmist here, as deeply affected with it, acknowledges. *O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.* When I sit in my house, or walk by the way; lie down on my bed, or rise to my labour; every step and motion thou see'st, and my rising thoughts are understood by thee. *Not a word is in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether;* whether uttered, or only formed ready for speech. He is compassed around with God's presence and providence, and his hand is ever near to help him. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain unto it.* We cannot know ourselves in any measure as God doth; much less can we by searching find out the Almighty to perfection, whose omnipresence and omniscience are mysteries to us unfathomable. But a practical sense of these upon our hearts we should labour to maintain: since God sees our very thoughts, they should be under restraint; since God hears, not an idle word should drop from our tongues; since God is with us in company, or alone, on our beds, at our tables, in our business, and his eye on all our works and ways, how careful, how circumspect should we be before him, and how fearful of offending!

2dly, Nothing can be conceived more sublime and affecting, than the description here given of God's universal presence.

1. He filleth all things. There is no escaping his eye

2 Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart; continually are they gathered together for war.

3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison *is* under their lips. Selah.

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent

by flight, nor concealment by darkness. Should we attempt by *flight* to elude his search, whither shall we go? *If I ascend up to heaven, God is there, and filleth it with his presence; If I make my bed in hell, hid in the silent grave, or even lying down in everlasting burnings, he is there, watching over the dust of his faithful people, and present in his wrath, even in the place of torment. If I take the wings of the morning, and meet the rising sun in the most distant east, or dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, or of the west, where the descending beam of day seems extinguished in the waters of the ocean, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me;* far from escaping, thou must support my steps; and there, as much as ever, I am in thy power, and under thine eye, nor can darkness conceal me from thee. *If I am fool enough to say, surely the darkness shall cover me, vain would be my hope; even the night shall be light about me; yea, the darkness bideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.* Let the workers of iniquity then tremble at the thought; God's eye is upon them, nor is there any darkness, or shadow of death, where they can hide themselves.

2. He made all things, and must needs therefore be acquainted with the work of his own hands. *Thou hast possessed my reins;* art acquainted with all that passeth in my inmost soul; *for thou hast covered me in the womb;* when there an embryo, thine eye beheld the unformed mass, and by thy plastic hand curiously wrought, each limb received its nice proportion, and every vessel discharged its several office. A miracle to ourselves! so fearfully and wonderfully are we made: a mystery inexplicable; all that we know, (and that is glaringly evident,) is this, that *Marvellous are thy works!* deserving our highest praise and adoration, and worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance.

3dly, We have,

1. The Psalmist's grateful acknowledgment of God's care over him. *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God, thoughts of mercy, peace, and grace, which David with great delight meditated upon. How great is the sum of them!* so innumerable, that the sand of the sea might be easier counted; and so continual, that every morning increased the sum: *when I awake, I am still with thee,* enjoy thy constant protection, and am happy in a sense of thy reviving presence. *Note;* A heart enlightened to know God's grace in Jesus Christ, is lost in wonder on the contemplation, and can only cry, *O the depth!*

2. He foresees the destruction of the wicked. *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God:* they are described as *bloody men, they speak against thee wickedly,* proud and blasphemers, and *thine enemies in heart and practice,* shewing their

violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.

5 The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah.

6 I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.

7 O God the LORD, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. Selah.

9 As for the head of those that compass

me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.

10 Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.

11 Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.

12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.

13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

their enmity against God's government and law; they take thy name in vain, perjured or profane; and just therefore it is, that their end should be according to their works.

3. He professes his own abhorrence of their practices and ways. *Depart from me*, I will have no fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness, nor keep company with such evil doers. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?* not their persons, but their sins; and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? grieved at the dishonour brought on God by their rebellion, grieved at the misery which they bring on themselves by their sins. *I hate them with perfect hatred*, sincerely detest their evil ways; *I count them mine enemies*, they must be enemies to me, because enemies to thee. *Note*; (1.) The ways of sinners we may hate, while we have the truest love and pity to their souls. (2.) They who hate God, must hate his image, wherever it appears.

4. He appeals to God for his own simplicity, and a great rejoicing it is to have the testimony of a good conscience. *Search me, O God*, for sincerity starts not at inquiry, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, for I desire to conceal nothing from thee, and see if there be any wicked way in me; I wish allowedly to be found in none, but who can understand his errors? discover it to me if I err, and shew me the evil, that it may be lamented and renounced; and lead me in the way everlasting, lead me in the paths of holiness, to the kingdom of everlasting glory, guided by thy word, upheld by thy Spirit, and enabled to persevere faithfully unto the end. And to this every pious soul will add its hearty Amen!

P S A L. CXL.

Title. למנצח מזמור לדוד. *lamnatseach mizmor ledavid.*] There is no doubt but David wrote this psalm; and it is pretty generally agreed, that it was written under the persecution of Saul, and occasioned by the malicious and treacherous dealings of Doeg and the Ziphites.

Ver. 2. Are they gathered together, &c.] Are they creating wars: forming and occasioning quarrels and contentions.

Ver. 8. Further not his wicked device] Or, as the original

may be rendered, *Permit not his wicked device to go forward, or be advanced*: so the prayer is, not so much that God would not give him good success, as that he would interpose to his hindrance, and blast and frustrate his designs, instead of permitting them to prosper. Mudge, in agreement with Bishop Hare, renders the next clause and the following verse, *Let those that beset me lift up the head: Let the labour of their own lips cover them.*

Ver. 10. Let burning coals] *Burning coals shall, &c. They shall fall into miry pits.* Mudge. The Psalmist seems here to allude to the destruction of the Sodomites. See what has been said on the 8th and 9th verses of the 137th psalm.

Ver. 11. Let not an evil speaker] Or, *A sycophant shall not. A man of tongue*, according to the original; which signifies with the Hebrews a detractor, or sycophant; one who gives his tongue the liberty to vent what mischief he pleases. The Chaldee expresses it remarkably by a *delator*, or *vile informer*, with a *three-fold*, or *three-folded tongue*; because such a man wounds three at once, the receiver, the sufferer, and himself.

Ver. 13. Surely the righteous, &c.] The two clauses here are co-incident. The latter means, as the former, that good men shall always be admitted into God's presence; that is, here, to thank him for their victory over the wicked.

REFLECTIONS.—Ist, The way to glory lies through much tribulation; thus David came to the throne of Israel, and we may expect to meet with our portion of temptation, to suffer for Christ, before we reign with him. We have,

1. The Psalmist's complaints; many, mighty, and inveterate were his enemies; they were evil in their dispositions, and violent in their rage against him, crafty and mischievous, incessantly studying his ruin, and united in strict confederacy against him. With tongues of malignant venom they aspersed his character. Hardened in wickedness, they stopped at no violence; and, with full purpose of heart, determined his destruction. Proud, and confident of success, they laid their snares for him in all his paths, and expected quickly to see him their prey. Thus was

R r

Christ

P S A L. CXLI.

David prayeth that his suit may be acceptable, his conscience sincere, and his life safe from snares.

A Psalm of David.

LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

Christ also beset with the malice and persecution of men, aspersed by their envenomed tongues; and snares laid to destroy him; while Herod and Pilate, priests and people, confederated against him, with ceaseless enmity pursued him to the cross. Let none of his servants count it strange, if they meet with the like enmity, slander, and opposition. The disciple is not above his master.

2. His prayer and confidence in God. *Deliver me from their hands, preserve me from their snares, keep me, for I cannot keep myself; Thou art my God, my rock, my refuge, on whom I depend, the strength of my salvation, able to save to the uttermost, engaged to do it in that covenant which seals thee mine. Hear the voice of my supplications, and answer me in peace, according to the protection that I have hitherto experienced; for thou hast covered my head in the day of battle, and warded off every mortal blow aimed at me by my enraged foes.* In the conflict with the powers of darkness, the Son of David thus offered up prayers and supplications, and was heard in the day of trouble, made triumphant in his resurrection, and his head exalted over all his foes. Behold here also every believer's warfare and strength. 1. His recourse is by prayer to God for strengthening and upholding grace. 2. He is enabled to exercise faith in God, as his God, and to find in him the strength of his salvation. 3. Thus is he protected in every dangerous conflict, and though his spiritual foes thrust sore at him, that he should fall, his head is covered, his soul preserved, and, if faithful, all his foes at last shall be made his footstool.

2dly, However prevalent for a time the wicked may seem, their triumphing is but for a moment.

1. David prays for the disappointment of his enemies. *Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked, further not his wicked device, or let it not come forth: however deep laid, or eagerly pursued, disconcert the enterprize when ready to be carried into execution, lest they exalt themselves, and grow insolent with success.*

2. He foresees their ruin approaching. For as *let* may be rendered *shall*, what appears a prayer may be translated as a prophecy; though that God should be glorified in the destruction of the obstinately impenitent, may, without any private enmity, be the subject of a believer's prayer. Their cursing and lies shall return upon their own heads, and their own mischief cover them with confusion. The wrath of God shall fall on them, as the fire that devoured the cities of Sodom; and, sunk into the pit of torment, they shall never rise again from the everlasting burnings. All lying tongues are but for a moment, and the gains of falsehood shall never be established in the earth: like a beast of prey, evil shall hunt the violent man, till, at the last, destruction final and eternal shall overtake him. And

2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work

this might be particularly levelled against Saul, or Doeg, but it is universally true of all the enemies of Christ and his people, whose end shall be, that they shall be rooted out at the last.

3. He expresses his confidence in God's care over his believing people. *I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted; he had experienced this himself, and was sure it would be still the case respecting his suffering servants, whose innocence he would vindicate, and whose quarrel he would espouse; and the right of the poor, because such are liable to be oppressed; but God is the poor man's friend, to do him that justice which on earth may be denied him. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name, acknowledging with gratitude his kind interposition on their behalf, and the upright shall dwell in thy presence, as children under their father's care protected and preserved, as servants in their master's house, to wait his orders, or as saints around his throne in glory, to follow him with their everlasting praises.*

P S A L. CXLI.

Title. מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד *mizmor ledavid.*] It is probable that David composed this psalm just before his flight to Achish, king of Gath, when he had a second time spared Saul's life (1 Sam. xxvi.), but could trust him no longer: upon which he takes the resolution mentioned 1 Sam. xxvi. 1, 2. As his determination was to fly speedily, there is no question but he did so, either the same night after his parting with Saul, or by the first morning's light: and it was in the evening of that day, when he was now upon the wing, as it were; his late dutiful behaviour towards Saul, and the other's implacable cruelty towards him and his followers, still fresh in his thoughts; and moreover reflecting upon the dangers and temptations to which his religion would expose him in a heathen country, that he pours out to God the following prayer, or soliloquy; for, that it was composed in the evening, appears from his desiring, ver. 2. that it might be accepted as an evening oblation. Peters on Job, p. 336. from whom the following notes are principally taken.

Ver. 1. Lord, I cry unto thee, &c.] This verse is an invocation of the true God, by his incommunicable name *Yehovah*; as the one eternal, self-existent, and unchangeable being; creator and governor of all things: and the earnest and repeated call here used by the Psalmist, *make haste unto me*, sufficiently declares him to have been in a situation of the utmost distress.

Ver. 2. Let my prayer, &c.] This shews the writer at a distance from the tabernacle; where all their solemn prayers, together with their daily sacrifices, were offered up; and therefore, with his face probably directed thither, he

iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

5 Let the righteous smite me; *it shall be a kindness*: and let him reprove me; *it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head*: for yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities.

6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.

7 Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.

he begs that God would accept of all that was in his power to perform: namely, the devotion of his heart, and the elevation of his hands in prayer: as if he had said, "Though this address of mine must necessarily want all those solemnities of preparation required in the service of thy holy tabernacle; yet let the purity and fervour of my heart, and the innocency of my hands now lifted up to thee, in this sad hour of my distress, be accepted instead of these, and prevail for deliverance and a safe retreat to me and my companions."

Ver. 3, 4. *Set a watch, O Lord, &c.*] Mr. Peters paraphrases these two verses thus: "I am now going to seek a retreat from the persecutions of my master Saul, amidst a race of idolaters, who will be curious to observe all my words and actions, and will attempt to draw me in to be a partaker with them in their idol worship, or suspect me as a spy or enemy, if I refuse to comply with them. But do thou, O Lord, set a watch before my mouth, a guard over the door of my lips; that I may neither endanger my own safety by my imprudent carriage, nor violate my religion by any weak compliances. Preserve me from that greatest of all evils, the renouncing thee to follow vain and strange gods. Let me not be guilty of this heinous and presumptuous sin, no, not so much as in thought. Let me abhor to play the hypocrite, by joining in the abominations of the heathen, though but in shew and appearance only: nor let me ever be allured by their luscious rites, or their luxurious meats, to mix in their religious festivals." We refer to the learned writer's laborious and ingenious criticism in vindication of this paraphrase.

Ver. 5. *Let the righteous, &c.*] I. Mr. Peters is of opinion, that David in this verse manifestly alludes to his anointment and designation to the throne. He translates and explains it thus: *Let the just man be still upbraiding me with my goodness, and let the ointment of my head be urged against me, it shall not break my head: for hitherto my prayer has been against their wickednesses.* "As for my past behaviour towards Saul, I can never repent of it, whilst I am conscious I have done my duty. Though my friends and followers, those advocates for strict justice, are still upbraiding me with my excessive piety and goodness; and though the ointment of my head, thy designation of me to the throne, be urged against me, either as a reason why I might justly take the life of Saul, or as the cause that he will never cease to persecute me; yet I trust in thy mercy; it shall not break my head, or bring me to destruction. For hitherto it has not done it; I am safe under thy protection; and yet my prayers are all that I have opposed against the wicked attempts of my enemies." This writer supposes the last clause of the verse to be elliptical, and that it should be supplied, according to his paraphrase: and he thinks that the verse thus understood very natur-

ally introduces the two next verses, where the mild and dutiful behaviour of David towards Saul, and Saul's cruelty towards him and his friends, are set together by way of contrast, in the strongest light. See the following notes. II. Mr. Mann and Houbigant nearly agree in the following translation: *Let the righteous instruct me in mercy, and reprove me; but let not the oil of the wicked anoint my head: yea, my prayers shall be a witness against their depravity.*—Ver. 6. *Let their judges be overthrown, &c.* III. Another writer observes, that *breaking the head*, in scripture language, means *destroying*, or utterly *subduing*. See Gen. iii. 15. And we may easily suppose David to mean by the expression of *excellent oil*, the plausible and enticing, but withal treacherous and ensnaring speeches of his idolatrous enemies. He has the same thought, Ps. lv. 21. *His words were softer than oil, yet be they very swords*:—so the LXX, *The oil of the sinner*:—Ethiopic, *The oil of sinners*:—Syriac, *The oil of the ungodly—shall not anoint my head*:—And the Arabic, *I will not anoint my head with the oil of sinners*: i. e. "I will not be enticed with their flattering and ensnaring speeches." The following translation by Mr. Green seems as reasonable as any: *Let the righteous man, out of kindness, correct me and reprove me: but let not the fragrant oil of the wicked anoint my head; for my prayer shall ever be against their wicked practices.*

Ver. 6, 7. *When their judges*] This first verse contains an account of David's humanity towards Saul, in giving him his life at two several times, when he had it in his power to destroy him as he pleased, says Mr. Peters, who translates it thus: *Their judges have been dismissed in the rocky places, and have heard my words that they were sweet.* That is, "their princes have been dismissed in safety, when I had them at an advantage in those rocky deserts, and they only heard me expostulate with them in the gentlest words." The next verse contains Saul's barbarity and cruelty towards David or his friends, in the horrid massacre of Abimelech and the priests, by the hand of Doeg; done in such a savage manner, that he compares it to the chopping and cleaving of wood. *Like as when one cutteth and cleaveth, so have our bones been scattered on the earth, at the command of Saul*; for so I read the Hebrew words, *לפי שאר* *lepi Saul*. As much as to say, "How unlike, how barbarous has their treatment been of me! my best friends slaughtered in great numbers at the command of Saul, and hewn to pieces in his presence, as one would cut or chop a piece of wood!" We may observe an elegant opposition between the words of David, which he calls *sweet or pleasant*, and *לפי שאר* *lepi Saul*, the command of Saul, or the cruel sentence pronounced by him. It may be proper just to remark, that the word *שפטיהם* *Shophtheim*, rendered *judges*, in the plural, may refer not only to Saul, but to his chief captain, and other military officers; for they were fast asleep about him when David and his com-

8 But mine eyes *are* unto thee, O GOD the LORD: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

9 Keep me from the snare *which* they

have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

panions surprised them; though it may be understood of Saul alone, and that by no very uncommon figure of speech. See particularly 1 Sam. xxiv. 4. in the original. As to his using the word *judge* rather than *king* or *prince*, there seems to be a peculiar elegance in it; as he was just about to mention that inhuman sentence of Saul's executed upon the priests of Nob. So that it is as if he had said, "Even those cruel judges, who have sentenced my friends and favourers without mercy, have been dismissed by me in safety."

Ver. 8. But mine eyes, &c.] When we reflect upon the surprising generosity of David towards Saul, it naturally excites one's curiosity to know the principle upon which he acted. A conduct so extraordinary must needs have some extraordinary basis for its support; I mean some fixed religious principle, which could enable him to surmount all difficulties. This is discovered to us in the present verse; and it is the noblest and simplest that can be imagined, namely, a firm trust in God, as the great Lord and Ruler of the world, and a steady resolution to obey him in all his commands: *For mine eyes are unto thee, Jehovah, my Lord; in thee have I trusted.* Among the sayings of Pythagoras this was one, ἀπλῶσον σεαυτον, *simplify thyself*, i. e. "Reduce thy conduct, if possible, to one single aim, and pursue it without weariness or distraction." If this single aim be, to approve ourselves to God by such a course of life as he prescribes; to adhere strictly to our duty, with an eye to him who has commanded it, and patiently submit the issue of things to his all-wise and gracious providence; we have then hit upon that principle which here appears to have animated David, and may with confidence address our prayers, through the blood of the Covenant, to the great Lord and Sovereign of all the world, in all our straits and difficulties, as he does in the following part of the psalm. *In thee have I trusted; make not my soul naked:* i. e. "Suffer it not to become naked and exposed to the assaults and machinations of my enemies" for, in the language of the holy scripture, God is often said to do, what he permits or suffers to be done. But whether David here prays to have his life preserved from danger, or his soul from sin, may admit of a question. The words will suit either explanation, and probably he might intend both; but chiefly the latter. We have seen from ver. 4. how earnestly he begs that God would protect him by his grace from complying with the idolatrous practices of the heathen, to whom he was about to fly for refuge; and it is remarkable, that in his last speech to Saul, he particularly dwells upon the danger to which his religion was exposed, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. *They have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord; saying, Go, serve other gods.* As if he had said, "They have done what lies in their power to drive me to idolatry, by forcing me into a country where I shall have the strongest temptations to it." This was a thing he seems to have dreaded more than death; and therefore he prays against it in the next verse. Peters.

Ver. 9, 10. Keep me from the snare, &c.] If Saul and his evil counsellors be meant in the first clause of the 9th verse, there is no doubt but the *heathen* to whom David was now driven for refuge, must be understood in the latter. They are here characterised, as in ver. 4. by the appellation, *workers of iniquity*, or *idolatry*; and the idols of the heathen were always *snare*s to the Israelites, as their history informs us, and as they are forewarned by God himself, Judg. ii. 3. *Their gods will be a snare unto you*; the same word with that translated *gins*, in this verse. The last verse may be considered either as a petition, or rather as an expression of his hope and assurance: *The wicked shall fall into their own nets together, and I shall still escape*; and this sense is to be preferred, because we find from the sequel of the history, that his prayer was answered to the full.

The prayers of a good man give us the most just and lively impression of his character. If ever he discloses his most secret thoughts, or the real frame and temper of his heart, it is in his devout retirements, where he opens and unbosoms himself before his Maker. And what an assemblage of the most substantial virtues discover themselves to us in this short prayer or soliloquy of David's! His faith and trust in God; his duty to his prince; his abhorrence of idolatry; his strict adherence to what was right and just, against all the persuasions of his friends, and all the provocations of his enemies; a magnanimity, that shewed itself in the moment of danger and distress; attended with a hope, the offspring of religion, and not the less heroic for being inspired. Horace has given us a very celebrated description of "A resolutely good man, whom neither the clamours of the people demanding what was wrong; nor the frowns of a tyrant threatening death, could shake from his solid purpose."

Iustum, et tenacem propositi, virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida, neque Auster
Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ,
Nec fulminantis magna manus Jovis:
Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum serient ruinæ.

Lib. iii. od. 3.

The man, in conscious virtue bold,
Who dares his secret purpose hold,
Unshaken hears the crowd's tumultuous cries,
And the impetuous tyrant's angry brow defies.
Let the loud winds, that rule the seas,
Their wild tempestuous horrors raise;
Let Jove's dread arm with thunders rend the spheres,
Beneath the crush of worlds undaunted he appears.

FRANCIS.

The image, to be sure, is beautiful; but nevertheless it is an image without life, compared with that which rises to our view in this psalm; for in the description given us by the Latin poet, though we take the whole of it together, we see nothing of that vital principle which should ani-

mate

P S A L. CXLII.

David sheweth that, in his trouble, all his comfort was in prayer unto God.

Maschil of David; A prayer when he was in the cave.

I CRIED unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.

2 I poured out my complaint before him: I shewed before him my trouble.

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

4 I looked on my right hand, and beheld,

mate a conduct so heroic, and which shines out so distinguishably in that of the Psalmist: I mean that sublime regard to him, whose will alone it is that gives the sanction to what is right and just; and under whose supreme direction all rational creatures ought to square their resolutions and behaviour. Peters.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, David was a man of sorrows, and a man of prayer. We have him here very importunate with God,

1. For speedy help. *Make haste unto me*, as one ready to be overwhelmed, unless God appeared for his salvation. *Note*; They who have a lively sense of their wants and danger, will be importunate in their supplications.

2. For gracious acceptance. *Give ear unto my voice*, as willing to grant my petitions; *let my prayer be set before thee as incense*, and the *lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice*, which being offered on God's altar were accepted before him. The incense of prayer must thus be offered on Christ our altar; and when, with our hands lifted up, our heart ascends in a flame of holy love, then is it a sacrifice of a sweet smell, acceptable and well-pleasing to God.

3. For direction what and how to speak. *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth in prayer*, that I may not rashly, unadvisedly, or negligently, utter what my heart doth not feel: in *trials*, that I may not drop a word of murmuring, complaint, or impatience; *among men*, that I may neither speak falsely, foolishly, nor passionately. *Keep the door of my lips*, which need continually a divine restraint, and without it can never be effectually bridled.

4. For preservation from all evil. *Incline not my heart to any evil thing*: not that God ever tempts men to sin, or inclines them to evil; but only leaves obdurate sinners to their own corrupted hearts, naturally inclined to evil; therefore we have need of his preventing and restraining grace to keep us, that we *practise not wicked works with men that work iniquity*, who make it their business and delight to sin, and draw in others; and unless the Lord preserve us, we are in danger of falling into their snares.

5. For a restraint from their luxuries. *Let me not eat of their dainties*; feasting as an epicure at their tables, or partaking with them in their sins; which, however to the corrupt appetite pleasing and sweet in the mouth, in the belly are bitter as gall, and poisonous as the viper's sting. *Keep me, Lord, from these deadly dainties!*

2dly, Though David heartily prays against the malignity of his enemies, yet,

1. He earnestly desires the rebukes of the faithful. *Let*

the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; I shall esteem it the best proof of real friendship: *and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head*, but through grace and the atoning blood serve to heal the wounds of sin; and, far from resenting the correction, it would engage his affections and prayers in their behalf: *for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities*: that God, in return for their kindness to him, may deliver them from their troubles. *Note*; (1.) Reproof is the most needful and kindest office of real friendship. (2.) To love reproof, and to be thankful for it, is among the surest symptoms of a gracious spirit. (3.) That reproof will be most effectual, which comes from those whose unsuspected piety gives weight to their words, and whose tender manner of applying it, soft as oil, makes it more penetrating. (4.) They who pray to be right, and yet are displeased to be rebuked for what is wrong, prove their hypocrisy.

2. He hopes, when his wicked enemies are destroyed, the people will receive him, and hear him with pleasure. *When their judges are overthrown in stony places*, as when Saul fell on the mountains of Gilboa, which he might foresee; or when all his other foes were destroyed, who would be punished, as men *cast down by the sides of a rock*, as was sometimes done with criminals; then *they shall hear my words, for they are sweet*; either the words of his pathetic song, 2 Sam. i. 17—27. or those divine compositions which would be published on his return from his exile, and which contained in them such a sweet favour of Christ.

3. He complains of his present wretched state. *Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth*: either literally so, such of David's friends as fell into Saul's hand might be slain and left unburied, or their bones dug up as the bones of traitors; or, figuratively they seemed as at the brink of the grave, and their condition hopeless as that of dry bones. *As when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth*, like chips that fly off from the blow of the axe, so were they driven to and fro, and persecuted by their enemies, and many of them put to death.

4. He in prayer commits his soul to God. *But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord*, the mighty saviour and hope of my soul; *in thee is my trust*, in thee alone; *leave not my soul destitute*; forsaken of thee I must needs perish: *but keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity*; though never so craftily concealed, preserve me from the danger. *Let the wicked fall into their own nets*, the righteous retaliation for their iniquity; *whilst that I withal escape*, unhurt by their mischievous designs. *Note*; (1.) Whilst our eye is to God, our feet shall not slip. (2.) The destruction of the wicked is determined

but *there was* no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.

6 Attend unto my cry; for I am brought

very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

terminated, and their devices to hurt others shall only hasten their own destruction.

P S A L. CXLII.

Title. משכיל לדוד *maskiil ledavid.*] This psalm was composed by David when he was in that miserable situation in the cave of Adullam, 1 Sam. xxii. or that of Engedi, 1 Sam. xxiv. He teaches us, by his own example, to repose ourselves wholly upon God, amid the greatest difficulties. The psalm consists of three parts; the first describes to us the religious turn of his mind, in all the various distresses to which he was subject, and the most threatening evils which encompassed him. He would pour forth his supplications before God, ver. 1, 2. The second part shews the greatness of his danger, and the secret hope he had in that God, who saw his situation, and whom he had chosen for his portion; ver. 3—5. The last part contains his earnest supplications to God to extricate him out of the cave, and give him and his friends fresh occasion for gratitude and praise.

Ver. 1, 2. I cried unto the Lord] I will cry; and so the following verbs would be rendered more properly in the future.

Ver. 3, 4. When my spirit, &c.] Now, when my spirit is overwhelmed within me, yet thou knowest my path. “Though the lowliness of my spirits renders me incapable of providing for my own escape; yet thou art able to conduct me by the right path.” Here he is supposed to make an effort for escaping. He finds he is way-laid in the path that he had designed to take: he looks on the right hand (for I consider the verbs as infinitive) but does not see the persons with whom he had concerted his escape. He despairs of getting off. Mudge. The reader will observe the beautiful brevity of the sentences in the 4th verse. Dr. Chandler renders the last clause, *There is no one that concerns himself for my life.* The Psalmist complains, and prays that God would regard it with compassion, that no one consulted his safety, or took any care to preserve his life. For נפשׁי *napsi*, should be rendered in this and many other places, *my life*, and not *my soul*.

Ver. 5—7. I cried unto thee, O Lord, &c.] He applies himself to God to rescue him out of this prison, the cave wherein he was concealed. *I have said, &c.* “I have solemnly devoted myself to thee, as my God and only refuge; hearken therefore, &c.” A way of speaking very common in the psalms. Mudge.

Ver. 7. The righteous shall compass me, &c.]

From me the righteous shall their hopes confirm,
When I the object of thy care appear.

FENWICK.

Dr. Chandler renders it, *The righteous will crown thee with*

praises on my account, when thou hast rewarded me; and the sense, according to him, is, that when good men should see the kindness of God in the favours bestowed on the Psalmist, they would bring their offerings of thanksgiving, and encompass his altar with their praises. Every part of this psalm shews the propriety of the inscription or title. He expressly mentions his being in a place *where he was entirely shut up;* where he saw no possible method of escaping, as having no friends who dared to own him and appear for his deliverance, and when every one seemed to desert him, and to have abandoned all care of his safety and life. This he pathetically describes, and in such terms as cannot fail to move the tender affections of every one who considers them. On the first sense of his danger, shut up in a cave, surrounded by three thousand chosen soldiers, closely observed by a watchful enemy, and one that would spare no art or pains to apprehend him, he seems almost to have despaired of himself; declares that his spirit was quite overwhelmed with the greatness of his distress; till at length, recollecting his principles and the promises which God had made him, he earnestly supplicates the protection of God, and assures himself that he should still praise God for his deliverance, and that good men should share his joy, and encompass the altar of God with thanksgiving for the mercy which he had shewn him.

REFLECTIONS.—No place or time is unseasonable for prayer. When Engedi, or Adullam was his oratory, David still found sweet communion with God, threatening as his danger seemed. We have,

1. His complaints, which out of the fulness of his heart he poured forth before the Lord. *I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and shewed before him my trouble,* to which from Saul his bloody persecutor he was exposed. It was enough to spread it before the Lord, whose tender mercies knew how to pity him, and his power to relieve him. *Note;* They who have a God of all grace to fly to, may safely leave in his hand all their troubles.

2. He appeals to God for his own simplicity. *When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knowest my path:* when reduced to the deepest distress, I still fled to no wrong methods to extricate myself. *In the way wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me,* seeking to entrap me every step I take. *Note;* When our consciences condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.

3. He was without help from man. His friends grew shy and were ashamed to own him; and, abandoned as it were to ruin, *refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.* Thus was Jesus forsaken, rejected, denied, when alone he tread the wine-press of the wrath of God.

4. When

P S A L. CXLIII.

David prayeth for favour in judgment: he complaineth of his griefs: he strengtheneth his faith by meditation and prayer: he prayeth for grace, for deliverance, for sanctification, and for destruction of his enemies.

A Psalm of David.

HEAR my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and 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 smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

4 Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.

5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.

6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.

7 Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

8 Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

9 Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.

10 Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my GOD: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

11 Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness sake bring my

4. When human help failed him, still God was his refuge, and portion in the land of the living, and to him he directed his prayer: and if God be our refuge, we need fear no danger; if he be our portion, we need wish for nothing more in the land of the living. *Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low, under affliction and distress: deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I, and I must without divine help be utterly swallowed up by them. Bring my soul out of prison, out of my straits and difficulties; that I may praise thy name. The righteous shall compass me about, admiring the mercy shown in his deliverance, and joining with him in his praises; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me; saving him from his enemies, fixing him on the throne, and fulfilling all the desires of his heart.* Note; (1.) We cannot be brought so low, but God can help us; and, though fettered in the bonds of corruption or temptation, he can open our prison-doors, and will, if we persevere in crying to him. Let us never despair. (2.) The mercies that our brethren enjoy should excite our praises, as members of the same body.

P S A L. CXLIII.

Title. מזמור לדוד *mizmor ledavid.*] This psalm is thought to have been composed by David, when Absalom his son persecuted him; and so it was inscribed in some old Greek copies. It is the last of those stiled penitential psalms.

Ver. 1. In thy faithfulness answer me] That is, "According to the promises which thou hast made to hear, and answer, that is, grant, the petitions of thy servant."

Ver. 2. Enter not into judgment] That is, "Do not call

"me to a rigorous account for my sins; (See 2 Sam. xiii 9, 11.) which have justly brought these troubles upon me." *Be justified*; namely, if thou shouldst proceed according to the rigour of thy law.

Ver. 3. He hath made me to dwell in darkness] *He maketh me to lie close in dark places.* The original word מַחְשְׁבֵי־מָוֶה *machshavim*, properly signifies dark places, and every where means the dark caverns of the earth, where, he complains in this and the preceding clause, his enemies forced him to hide himself, like the dead, who were deep inclosed in the bowels of the earth; a manner of speaking well suited to that state to which David was reduced in the wilderness by his enemies. See Mudge.

Ver. 5. I remember the days of old] i. e. "But still, upon a more sedate reflection, I consider not only what thou hast done for me during the persecutions of Saul; but also that long before, in my younger days, thou deliveredst me from the greatest dangers." See 1 Sam. xvii. 34, &c.

Ver. 6. My soul thirsteth after thee, &c.] *My soul is as a thirsty land for thee.* Mudge.

Ver. 8. In the morning] i. e. Speedily, early; and so it is well rendered, Pf. xc. 14. See Pf. xlvii. 5.

Ver. 10. Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness] *Let thy good Spirit lead me through plain ground.* Mudge: Who observes, "I have translated it so, as the clause before leads to this sense; and there is an expression much the same, Pf. xxvii. 11. in which he prays God to conduct him in a plain and level way. Such was that of God's law; because, if he went out of that, he would be liable to stumble, and his enemies would take advantage to his prejudice." But, considering the particular circum-

soul out of trouble.

12 And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.

P S A L. CXLIV.

David blesteth God for his mercy: he prayeth that God would powerfully deliver him from his enemies: he promiseth to praise God: he prayeth for the happy estate of the kingdom.

A Psalm of David.

BLESSED be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.

2 My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.

3 LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!

4 Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.

5 Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains and they shall smoke.

circumstances of the Psalmist in these two psalms, I am inclined to think that he prays to God to be safely conducted into the plain country out of that rude mountainous wild where he was now forced to secrete himself.

Ver. 12. Cut off] Or, *Shalt thou cut off.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, When we are in trouble, God permits us to pour our sorrows into his bosom.

1. The Psalmist begs an audience to his prayers, and pleads, as the ground of his hope, God's *faithfulness* to his promises, and his *righteousness*; or his grace and mercy, which includes the righteous obedience of Christ to the death of the cross, the purchase of all our blessings. *Note*: If ever we hope for God's acceptance of us, it must be not for any thing in us, but purely of grace for his dear Son's sake, according to the promises of his word.

2. He humbly prays, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* *Note*: (1.) The most righteous man alive cannot bear the severity of God's justice, according to a covenant of works. (2.) They who best know their own hearts, will ever be the first to cry for mercy at God's hand, conscious that the merit of the death of Christ is as necessary for the highest in grace, as for the guiltiest of sinners. (3.) They who plead guilty before the law, and fly to the grace of the gospel in Jesus Christ, shall be justified from all things.

3. He complains of his afflicted state. Persecuted by his bitter foe; brought to the gates of the grave; compelled to hide himself in solitary caves, as if driven from the light, and already a companion of the dead; his spirit melancholy as his circumstances; and his heart within him desolate, dejected, and ready to sink into despair. *Note*: When the believer's or the penitent's distress is greatest, God's power and grace shall be the more magnified in his deliverance.

4. Meditation and prayer are his chief resource. *I remember the days of old; the wonders that God had wrought for his church and people, and for himself also, in former days. I meditate on all thy works; on the power and goodness of God therein displayed, and draw from thence encouragement for my soul. I muse on the work of thy hands, and speak thereof to others, as the most pleasing subject of discourse. I stretch forth my hands unto thee, in eager and importunate prayer; My soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land;*

with such longings as the parched ground, whose fissures seem to gape for the refreshing showers. *Note*: (1.) Remembrance of God's dealings with his people of old, and with ourselves in time past, is very encouraging in our distresses. (2.) They who are athirst for God, his love, and favour, shall never be sent empty away from a throne of grace.

2dly, Oppressed, and ready to faint under his trials, we have his fervent cries. *My spirit faileth; swooning with the weight of his affliction, or with the sense of his sins; but a step from the pit of death, or perhaps in his own apprehension from the belly of hell; therefore, Hear me speedily, or I am past recovery. His particular requests are,*

1. *Hide not thy face from me; for the sense of God's displeasure to a truly penitent soul is more bitter than death, and the hidings of his countenance the forest affliction to a returning backslider.*

2. *Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for God hath kindness still in store for his believing people in their deepest state of anguish, and faith embraces it; for in thee do I trust; and they can never perish, who perseveringly trust in him.*

3. *Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for in our afflictions our eyes may be so filled with tears, that we cannot clearly see the path of duty; but the pious heart is conscious that it hath but one desire, and that is to please God; and therefore I lift up my soul unto thee for guidance and direction.*

4. *Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies: they are many: they are mighty: too mighty for me to oppose; but I flee unto thee to hide me: and they are safe from every foe, spiritual or temporal, who are covered with the shadow of his wings. My soul, fly ever thither for thy refuge!*

5. *Teach me to do thy will; for we have neither understanding to know what it is, nor ability to follow it, till God instruct and guide us; for thou art my God; I give myself up to thee as my covenant God, to be made such as thou wouldst have me to be.*

6. *Thy Spirit is good; or, Let thy good Spirit lead me into the land of uprightness.* It is not only the essential perfection of this Spirit to be good, but his office it is to sanctify our souls, and lead us in the right way, that we may come through the paths of holiness to the land of eternal purity and

6 Cast forth lightning and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.

7 Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children;

8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.

9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery, *and* an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

10 *It is he* that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.

11 Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.

12 That our sons *may be* as plants grown up in their youth; *that* our daughters *may be* as corner-stones, polished *after* the similitude

and blessedness; and here every gracious soul longs to come.

7. *Quicken me, O Lord, from my low and dejected state, and revive my fainting soul, for thy name's sake, for the glory of thy grace and faithfulness. For thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble;* not only deliver my body from death, but my spirit from the forer temptations which beset me; for if our soul be safe, then our all is safe.

8. *And of thy mercy shalt thou cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul;* my persecutors, who will meet just judgment from an avenging God, who espouseth the quarrel of his oppressed people; *for I am thy servant,* who, engaged in thy service, may hope for thy protection. And thus shall all the enemies of Christ and his people be cut off at the last, and tribulation in full measure be given to those who troubled us.

P S A L. CXLIV.

Title. לדוד *ledavid.*] This is evidently a psalm of triumph, probably upon the same occasion with the 118th. I guess so, says Mudge, partly from the particular deliverance of David from the evil sword of Ishbibenob; and partly for that it seems to be a victory over the Philistines, (for them I take to be the *sons of the stranger*, as the LXX. calls them ἀλλοφύτοι; and being in a manner mixed with the sons of Israel, it was natural by way of distinction to call them so;) who by their everlasting wars against Saul and David, certainly in breach of treaties, seem to be truly characterised by persons *whose mouth speaketh falsehood, &c.* From the victory the author takes occasion to describe the happiness of those people who live under the protection of God.

Ver. 1. Which teacheth my hands, &c.] Who hath taught my hands; and so in ver. 2. *Who hath subdued, or made my people subject to my will.* Green renders it, *Who reduceth nations to my obedience.*

Ver. 3, 4. Lord, what is man, &c.?] This is spoken in rapture; reflecting on the regard that God had shewn to his petition, which, in his usual way, he repeats in the very words in the four next verses.

Ver. 5. Bow thy heavens] See 2 Sam. viii. and xxii. 10. The images here are taken from the promulgation of the law on mount Sinai.

Ver. 6. Cast forth, &c.] Cast forth lightning, and make them [the heavens] swell: cast thy darts and melt them. Schult.

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Ver. 8. Whose mouth speaketh vanity, &c.] Whose mouth uttereth falsehood, and whose right hand is a right hand of deceit: "For with that hand, as with a pledge, they confirmed the treaties of peace and leagues of friendship. "made with them; all which they have perfidiously broken." Lifting up the hand was the usual ceremony at the taking of an oath. See Gen. xiv. 22. So that this verse seems to contain a repetition of the same sense; agreeable to which the Chaldee interprets the former part of the verse to mean a false oath; and the Arabic renders the latter part thus, *and their oath is an oath of iniquity.* May not this ancient solemnity of lifting up the hand have given rise to the custom practised at this day in our courts of justice, where the party accused holds up his hand when he declares himself guilty or not guilty of the facts laid to his charge?

Ver. 9. Upon a psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings] Upon the ten-stringed psaltery. There is nothing for the particle *and* in the Hebrew.

Ver. 11. Rid me, and deliver me] This is a kind of *da capo*, a repetition of that sentence upon which the psalm turns. These are probably the very words of the cry hinted at in Pf. cxviii. 5. which gave occasion to the following verses in that psalm, and the two first in this. Mudge.

Ver. 12, &c. That our sons may be, &c.] Our sons are like plants grown tall in their youth; and our daughters like corner-pillars polished for the ornament of a palace. Green; who renders the following verses also in the present; and with him agrees Mr. Mudge, who observes, that these verses are spoken in a kind of exultation, arising from a view of the happiness which they enjoyed; and are connected to the 9th and 10th. The 11th is a parenthesis; for it appears from the last verse, that he is not wishing, but describing a prosperity; describing their *sons* like young trees, large at the same time that they are young; their *daughters* exactly and beautifully shaped, like pillars for a palace: their *sheep* not bringing forth thousands, but multiplied by ten thousands in their *out countries* (for sheep were kept abroad on the open downs, not under or near a covert); I take חֲצוּצוֹת *chutsoth*, here, to signify this; for *streets* are no places for sheep. Their *oxen* are not described by number, for that belongs to sheep, but by their firmness and usefulness for tillage: according to the original, מִסְבָּלִים *mesubbalim*, fit to bear; i. e. the yoke. The following words אֵין פְּרִץ *ein perets* I take to mean, *No house-breaking;* (פְּרִץ *parits* is a robber or house-breaker;) *No violent intrusion or forcing a man out of his property;*

of a palace:

13 *That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets:*

14 *That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.*

15 *Happy is that people, that is in such a*

case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.

PSAL. CXLV.

David praiseth God for his fame, for his goodness, for his kingdom, for his providence, and for his saving mercy.

David's Psalm of praise.

I WILL extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.

property; and thus it will agree with what follows; *No complaining in our streets*; namely, upon account of violence or injustice. Kimchi observes of these verses, that all those three blessings, namely, of the womb, of the earth, and of cattle, which are mentioned in Deut. xxviii. 4. are specified here. Green renders the second clause of the 14th verse, *There is no hostile invasion, nor going into captivity*. We may just observe, that the Hebrew word *רחוב* *rechob*, rendered *streets* in this verse, is different from that so rendered in the former. The old English word *street*, from the Latin *stratum*, signifies any place for *rest* or *repose*; a *bed*, a *couch*, a *litter*, or place fit for ewes to couch or lamb: and our translators in the 13th verse seem to have used it properly, and agreeable to the Hebrew, in this sense.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, All the returns that we can make for mercies received, are blessing and praise ascribed to the gracious giver of all good. Of this the Psalmist sets us the example.

1. He blesses God for all the goodness that he had experienced. *Blessed be the Lord my strength*, by whose power I have been upheld, and by whose providence I have been protected; *which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight*; and from a shepherd's crook enabled him to wield Goliath's sword. *My goodness*, the author of all grace, and engaged to be mine, to bless me in a covenant of love; *and my fortrefs*, where I am safe from the attacks of my enemies: *my high tower*, above the reach of human or Satanical malice; *and my deliverer* out of every danger: *my shield*, to guard me in the day of battle; *and he in whom I trust*, who neither can nor will ever disappoint my confidence, while I depend upon him: *who subdueth my people under me*; bringing me, after all my wanderings, to the peaceable possession of Israel's throne.

2. He expresses his admiration of God's condescension and kindness. *Lord, what is man*, so low in his original, and now become so vile by sin, *that thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?* shewing such poor and wretched creatures such kindness and regard; especially sending his Son to be incarnate to redeem them. *Man is like to vanity*; an empty nothing, or a vapour. *His days are as a shadow that passeth away*; so swift, so transitory. O that men were wise, that they pondered these things, that they considered their latter end. If their moment be so short, and eternity depends upon it, how diligently should they redeem each hour!

3. He looks up to God for support against all his remaining enemies; and calls on him to manifest his presence in some tremendous displays of his power, (as when he de-

scended on Sinai's hoary top,) to scorch them with his lightnings, and shoot forth those arrows of his vengeance, which no human powers can for a moment withstand. By this divine interposition he hopes for deliverance out of the deep waters of trouble, and the hosts of enemies which surrounded him. And their character called for such righteous judgment against them: *their mouth speaketh vanity*, false and deceitful; *and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood*; whether listed up in prayer, or in a solemn oath; the one is hypocritical, the other faithless. *Note*; (1.) There is a terrible day approaching, when vengeance will overtake the enemies of God. (2.) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of the deepest waters of affliction; and they who call upon him will find him near to save them. (3.) Falsehood and lies may for a moment prosper, but in the end will issue in everlasting confusion.

2dly, We have,

1. David's praises for his deliverances in answer to his prayer. *I will sing a new song unto thee, O God*; and join his music with his voice, to raise the sound: *Upon a psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings, will I sing praises unto thee*. And abundant reason he had: *for it is he that giveth salvation unto kings*, whose armies are not their safety, but the power of God giving success to their enterprises; *who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword* of all his secret and open enemies. The Son of David was thus enabled also to triumph, when God raised him from the dead, and exalted him to the throne; sin, Satan, death, and every enemy of his faithful people, being bruised under his feet.

2. The Psalmist prays for the continuance of the same care over himself, (many enemies of the same ill character remained, from whom he desires to be delivered,) and for his subjects, that prosperity, plenty, and peace, might reign among them; their families be increased, their sons and daughters endowed with every corporal and mental accomplishment; their garners full with every kind of store; their flocks multiplied exceedingly: their oxen strong; no irruptions from an enemy; no leading out to captivity; no complaints of faction, famine, sickness, or the sword, ever heard; but all peaceful without and quiet within. Such a state cannot but denote a happy people: not that happiness consists in these outward blessings merely; but, where bestowed, they are marks of God's favour, which is the supreme felicity. *Happy, therefore, are the people who have the Lord for their God*. *Note*; (1.) The blessings of the basket and the store, so far as they come from God in a way of love, are doubly sweet; and they twice enjoy this world's good things who see and gratefully bless the hand

which

2 Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.

3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.

5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.

6 And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; and I will declare thy greatness.

7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.

8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

10 All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.

11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;

12 To make known to the sons of men his

mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.

15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

18 The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

20 The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

which bestows them. (2.) All that earth can give is but shadow, without God. He alone can truly satisfy the desires of the soul. (3.) They who have God for their Lord, bound to them by grace through faith in a covenant of love and peace, must needs be happy, for all his things are theirs.

P S A L. CXLV.

Title. תְּהִלָּה לַדָּוִד *tehillah ledavid.*] It has been thought that David composed this admirable hymn, after he had obtained those favours of God for himself, and for the nation, which he begs in the foregoing psalm; in the 9th verse whereof it is imagined by some that he promises this psalm; concerning which many of the ancient Hebrews were wont to say, (too much in the Pharisaic spirit,) that "He could not fail to be a child of "the world to come, who should repeat this psalm three "times every day." It is a song of praise to God, in which the author magnifies all his attributes, and his goodness particularly, in such a manner, as his people, and the whole body of mankind, he intimates, should adore him, and do him homage. The psalm is of the alphabetical kind, and therefore no great connection is to be expected in it. See Bishop Lowth's 24th Prelection.

Ver. 6. And men shall speak] So shall men speak of the might of thy awful doings, when I have declared thy greatness. Mudge, Houbigant, Bishop Hare, and others, read the 5th verse they shall speak; and so on in the plural.

Ver. 7. They shall abundantly utter, &c.] The Hebrew

word יָבִיט *iabbiu*, properly signifies to pour forth, as a fountain doth water.

Ver. 12. To make known, &c.] Making known, &c. his mighty acts. This sudden change of persons, as we have before observed, is frequent among the Hebrews.

Ver. 14.] Between this and the 13th verse is omitted the verse beginning with *nun*, in the Hebrew; but as the LXX. and some other translations have it, it is easily supplied: אֱמַן יְהוָה *nceman Jehowah, &c.* The Lord is faithful in his words, and holy in all his works.

Ver. 18. In truth] Or, in fidelity, or constancy. This fidelity or constancy may be applied either to the person praying, or to the prayer itself. If to the person, it then signifies his firm adherence to God, and constancy in serving him, without applying himself to any indirect means to obtain what he prays for; but waiting only on God to receive it from him in his good time. If to the prayer itself, it signifies the constancy of his address, in not giving over his petitions when they are not immediately granted, but enforcing them with importunity; and it is to the union of these two conditions that the promise is here made, that the prayer so qualified shall certainly, in God's due time, be answered by him.

Ver. 21. And let all flesh bless his holy name, &c.] We are taught in this admirable psalm, that as all things were made by the Lord, so all things subsist by him: that his providence extends to the minutest portion of his works; but his fatherly care is more especially over those that fear him; always near to defend them: He hears them when

P S A L. CXLVI.

The Psalmist voweth perpetual praises to God: he exhorteth not to trust in man. God for his power, justice, mercy, and kingdom, is only worthy to be trusted.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise the LORD,
O my soul.

2 While I live will I praise the LORD:
I will sing praises unto my God while I have
any being.

3 Put not your trust in princes, nor in the
son of man, in whom *there is* no help.

4 His breath goeth forth, he returneth to

they cry unto him; he delivers them in their distress; he grants them their hearts' desire: considerations, which ought to fill us with great love for so gracious a God; lead us to imitate his goodness; inspire us with a sincere attachment to piety, which procures these precious advantages; and animate us with ardent zeal to bless him, to declare his praises, and to glorify him for ever.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, This and the following psalms to the end are full of praises: the present is called David's Psalm of Praise, as being probably often made use of by him.

1. He opens with this holy resolution, *I will extol thee, my God, O King;* the glorious Jehovah, the King Messiah. Continual and persevering should be his song; every day his tongue should not be silent; and not only through the years of time, but to the ages of eternity, he hoped to be engaged in this blessed employment. *I will bless thy name for ever and ever.*

2. Excited by his example, others would join his songs, and from age to age the blessed work be transmitted to posterity; and generations yet unborn should perpetuate the sound. *Note;* It should be our desire and delight to see the rising generation improving on the piety of their forefathers.

3. The subject for their praises is boundless. *Great is the Lord,* in all his divine perfections, and greatly to be praised, though our highest expressions fall infinitely short of his greatness, which is unsearchable. Transcendently glorious is the honour of his majesty; whether he be considered as of the One Divine Essence, and the brightness of the Father's glory; or as Mediator, exalted to be the head over all things; angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject unto him. Glorious also are his wondrous works of creation and providence, but especially of redemption, his incarnation, sufferings, glory, and the great things he daily doth in behalf of his church and people. Terrible are his acts of judgment against his enemies; such as he hath already executed upon his enemies in all the ages past—and greater still are reserved for the day of his appearing and glory. And withal he is good as he is great, in all his dispensations of providence and grace, becoming incarnate, living, dying, rising, reigning to bless and save all who perseveringly believe in him. Goodness so great, that it is more than we are able to express; but the memory of which should ever be warm upon our hearts: Gracious, to pardon all the sins of those who believe; full of compassion, to pity the ignorant and the tempted; slow to anger, notwithstanding the manifold provocations that we daily give him; and of great mercy towards every miserable soul that flies to him for succour: Good to all, in a way of providential kindness, and in the offer of awakening grace; and his tender

mercies over all his works, particularly over all those who, by grace, live to him in faith, and cleave to him in love: and all in a way of strict righteousness, he having by his obedience unto death, fully satisfied the demands of God's law; so that now, without any impeachment of his holiness or truth, he can exercise his mercy and grace to the sinful sons of men: and these views of the grace and glory of our Immanuel furnish subjects for our praise, which eternity can never exhaust.

2dly, New matter for our praise is here suggested from the administration of the divine government among men. *All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord;* all bear stamped upon them the wisdom, power, and goodness of their Creator. But they stand silent monuments of his praise: man is the tongue of this lower world; and thy saints, as many as by divine light have their eyes opened, and their hearts enlarged with divine love, they shall bless thee, ascribing to him the honour of all his glorious works.

1. They shall speak of the majesty, glory, and power of his kingdom, quite different from that of the sons of men, established in the hearts of his people, and consisting in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: his mighty acts, the miracles that he hath wrought of old for his church and people, and the wonders of his gospel-word converting thousands of souls in a day; and the perpetuity of his dominion, which through all generations shall endure, and run coeval with the days of eternity.

2. His grace is as his power infinite. On him the eyes of all wait; and all their wants, from the least to the greatest, are liberally supplied. And with especial care he watches over his believing people, upholding those who fall into affliction or temptation, that they sink not under their burdens, and raising up those that be bowed down, under a sense of sin and corruption, or groaning under their sorrows; near to every poor sinner that calls upon him in truth, really feeling his burdens, and sighing to be relieved: and those who perseveringly fear and love him, have every desire granted which true faith can ask, whether respecting the blessings of grace or glory, of time or eternity. But all the wicked will be destroyed, with everlasting destruction of both body and soul in hell. In all which his dispensations, both of mercy to the faithful, and punishment to his enemies, the Lord is righteous, yea, he is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works: and he will appear to be so at the last day, when all will be obliged to own the equity of his procedure, his saints adore him, and sinners be speechless before him.

3. The Psalmist concludes with his fixed purpose to praise this great and gracious God; and exhorts all to join in his praises, and to eternity to adore the holy name of Jehovah.

his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

5 Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:

6 Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:

7 Which executeth judgment for the oppressed, which giveth food to the hungry.

The LORD looseth the prisoners:

8 The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:

9 The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

10 The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.

Jehovah. May my soul be ever engaged in this blessed work. Amen, and Amen!

P S A L. CXLVI.

THESE five last psalms are particularly stiled the *Hallelujahs*, because they both begin and end with that word. The Vulgate, LXX, and other ancient versions, ascribe this psalm to Haggai and Zechariah. It was probably written after the captivity, when the Jews found it was in vain to rely upon the favour of princes; some of whom hindered the building of the temple, as much as Cyrus at the first had furthered it.

Ver. 4. *His thoughts perish*] *His projects perish*. Mudge. "All the designs which he had formed in favour of his dependants are frustrated and disappointed."

Ver. 8. *The Lord openeth the eyes, &c.*] Illuminates their minds; or even restores their natural sight, when it is defective and weak; or, when perfectly gone, and there are no hopes of human cure. But this part of the psalm was most exactly and literally fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, when he came to give salvation to us.

Ver. 9. *But the way, &c.*] *The way—he will overthrow*. Mudge. Their steps shall be perplexed and puzzled, so that they shall stumble and fall, and all their projects be defeated.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, David's heart overflowed with gratitude, and therefore his lips were filled with praise. He could say, with deepest sensibility of the blessing, *My God*, and could not therefore but add, *I will praise him while I have any being*. Sensible of the vanity of all besides to help, and the insignificance of every creature, he bids us put no trust in any son of man, not even in the mightiest princes. They are changeable, their favour precarious, their promises often delusive: but be they never so able to help us, never so willing, the greatest are dying worms, returning to the dust from whence they came; their breath expires, their projects vanish, and all their thoughts of aggrandizing themselves, or their friends, are at an end.

Note: (1.) Whatever a man may possess in this world, all that he can properly call *his earth*, is that pittance of a grave allotted for his last abode. (2.) Hope in man is delusory; hope in God knows no disappointment. (3.) Though in man there is no help, there is a Son of Man mighty to save; and blessed are they that put their trust in him.

2dly, What is the true happiness of man? The question is here resolved. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob*

for his help, in all his trials, temptations, and afflictions; whose hope is in the Lord his God, the never-failing refuge of all who fly to him for succour; the Saviour of the faithful in every distress, and to the uttermost. For he is,

1. Able to save them. He is the creator of all things; heaven, and earth, and sea, with all their inhabitants, are the works of his hands; and he that is the almighty Author of all, must needs be as almighty to preserve.

2. He hath promised to help them. *He keepeth truth for ever*; he is the Amen, the faithful and true witness; and truth itself must fail before his word of promise can disappoint the faithful soul.

3. He is just. *He executeth judgment for the oppressed*; vindicates their injured innocence, and brings deserved vengeance on their enemies; as in the last day, if not before, will abundantly appear.

4. His tender mercies are over all his works. *He giveth food to the hungry*; not only the bread of earth to nourish their bodies, but himself, the bread of life, which cometh down from heaven, to nourish the immortal soul.

5. The distressed who seek him, have ever found him their ready friend. *He looseth the prisoners*, bound with disease, or bound with chains of iron. He opens the eyes of the blind, and raises up those that are bowed down with infirmity. Abundant instances of which appeared, when in the days of his flesh he wrought such miraculous cures, Luke, xiii. 11, 12., Mat. xi. 5., John, ix. 32, &c. But greater works than these he doth. The prisoners of sin are loosed by the preaching of his gospel, and the power of Satan broken. The eyes of our mind, blinded by corruption, receive divine illumination; and the impotent faculties of our souls are delivered from their infirmities. The burdens of sin, of sorrow, of temptation, are loosed by him; and with the discoveries of his love, the heads bowed down as the bulrush, under a sense of guilt, are lifted up in praise and joy.

6. His love is upon his people, *the righteous*, completely such by virtue of their union with him, and as such the objects of his high regard; who are also renewed by his Spirit, and enabled to walk before him and please him.

7. The destitute are relieved by him. The strangers, whom no man careth for; the fatherless and widow, whose situation lays them open to oppression, he preserves. The Syro-Phœnician woman, the Samaritans, the widow of Nain, proved the truth of this: and the strangers of the Gentiles, the spiritually destitute, have found him a merciful God.

8. The

P S A L. CXLVII.

The prophet exhorteth to praise God for his care of the church, his power, and his mercy: for his providence: for his blessings upon the kingdom, for his power over the seasons, and for his ordinances in the church.

PRAISE ye the LORD: for *it is* good to sing praises unto our God; for *it is* pleasant; and praise is comely.

2 The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

3 He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

4 He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by *their* names.

5 Great *is* our LORD, and of great power: his understanding *is* infinite.

6 The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

7 Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving;

8. The wicked will be destroyed by him. Their *way he turneth upside down*; he will blast their designs, and break their power; and, if not prevented by a timely and penitent return to him, will turn them into hell, to receive the eternal punishment of their sins.

9. The kingdom of Christ shall endure for ever. He shall reign, and therefore his faithful people may be satisfied he will assuredly help them: *even thy God*, whose perfections are all engaged for their salvation, *unto all generations*: and such reviving hope cannot but make their souls happy, and engage their everlasting praises. *Hallelujah!*

P S A L. CXLVII.

THIS psalm is supposed to have respect to the return of the Jewish nation from the Babylonish captivity, and the instauration of Jerusalem which followed upon it. It has been very probably conjectured that Nehemiah wrote it; and by the 2d, 3d, and 13th verses it seems to have been composed just after the restoration upon the rebuilding of Jerusalem; and at such a time especially praise must look becoming.

Ver. 4. He telleth the number of the stars, &c.] i. e. "He distinctly and exactly knows them, how numerous soever they be, (see Gen. xv. 5.) and how confusedly soever they seem to us to be scattered in the sky, as we do those things which we call by their proper names; and thus he knows how to gather the outcasts of Israel out of all their dispersions, and to find every one of them, wheresoever they are."

Ver. 7. Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving] Hebrew, Answer to the Lord in praise. "Sing alternately;" which may fairly be supposed to be the sense intended by the prophet, as it was the ancient practice to sing alternately. The precentor beginning with the voice, it was usual for

sing praise upon the harp unto our God:

8 Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grafs to grow upon the mountains.

9 He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.

10 He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.

11 The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.

13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.

14 He maketh peace *in* thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.

15 He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly.

the instruments to follow to the same tune and key. See Fenwick, and particularly Bishop Lowth's 19th Prelection.

Ver. 9. He giveth to the beast his food] The Hebrew word indifferently signifies either a tame or a wild beast; but this passage of the Psalmist is to be understood only of wild beasts; those for whom God by his especial providence prepares food, and who have no other care taken of them. The beasts which live among men are taken care of by them; but the wild beasts that live upon the mountains, and in woods and desert places, are fed only from God. The rain that distils from the heavens, enriches those dry hills, and makes grafs to grow thereon; and so God gives to these wild beasts their food, after the same manner of divine providence, as, at the end of the verse, he is said to provide for young ravens. Though what some tell us of these birds is not true, (for it is certain they are not less careful of their young than others are;) yet, as the rearing up the young of any species of animals, is a striking instance of the ordinary providence of God; and the cawing of a young raven in poetical speech may very beautifully be considered as a sort of natural prayer to God, in answer to which he supplies their wants; this certainly is sufficient to justify the Psalmist's expression.

Ver. 10. He delighteth not in the strength of the horse] See Pl. xxxiii. 16, 17. Mr. Green renders this, He delighteth not in the courage of the horse, nor is pleased with the agility of the warrior. The meaning seems to be, "The Lord, who fighteth for us, (see Neh. iv. 20.) will not take part with our enemies, though they are superior to us in the strength of their cavalry and the agility of their infantry. These, though the natural causes of military success, are of no efficacy against the interposition of the Deity. The fear of him is a more certain assurance of conquest, than any or all human resources."

16 He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.

17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?

18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the

waters flow.

19 He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

20 He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.

Ver. 16, 17. He giveth snow, &c.] The winters in the east, in some years, and at some places, are remarkably cold and severe. Fulcherius Carnotensis saw the cold prove deadly to many. Jac. de Vitriaco informs us, that the same thing happened to many of the poor people engaged in an expedition, in which he himself was concerned, against mount Tabor: that he 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 burthen, actually died. Albertus Aquensis tells us, that the same thing happened to thirty of the people who 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. We have sometimes, it may be, wondered that an eastern author, in a hymn composed for the use of those warmer climes, should say of God, as in these verses, *He giveth the snow, &c.* The preceding citations may remove that wonder. See Observations, p. 12. and Ezra, x. 9.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, He takes up this psalm as he concludes the former, with *Hallelujah!* and abundant cause there is, why we should continually sing and give praise unto the Lord. He is *our God*; we have an interest in his favour: *It is good* to praise him, it is our bounden duty and highest interest. It is *pleasant*, for this service is especially its own reward: it is *comely*; pleasing to God, and most becoming us as his creatures, but especially as his children; in that relation we are particularly bound to praise him,

1. For his kindness and care towards his city and people. *The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel:* literally, when David repaired the city, and those who had suffered with him as outlaws were restored; or spiritually, he buildeth up his gospel-church, and prepares the heavenly Jerusalem for the abode of his faithful ones, who by sin had made themselves outcasts, and whom the world, on their returning to God, rejected as the off-scouring of all things.

2. For his compassion towards the miserable. *He healeth the broken in heart,* whose souls by sin were sore troubled, and, shocked at the remembrance of past transgressions, were ready to lie down in despair, and perish. These he healeth, pouring in the oil of his blood which cleanseth from all sin; and with the tender hand of his grace *bindeth up their wounds*, speaking peace to their consciences, and filling them with his divine consolations.

3. For his infinite power and wisdom. Innumerable as the stars are, to him they are known; for they are indeed his own workmanship, and *he calleth them all by their names*, appoints them their place; and they as servants are obedient to his orders. So great and glorious is the Lord; so great his power, so infinite his understanding. His

faints are the stars in his right hand; he knoweth them, and is their friend and their God.

4. For his dealings towards the sons of men. *The Lord lifteth up the meek*; who in their own eyes are little, and patiently endure the afflictions of providence, or the provocations of men. These he comforts, and will exalt to the inheritance among the saints in light; but *he casteth the wicked down to the ground*, with strokes of heavy judgment in this world, by sudden and untimely death, and at last will cast them down into the pit of everlasting destruction.

5. For his providential regard towards all his creatures. Drawn up in copious exhalations, thick clouds of water cover the skies: formed by his power into drops of rain, they empty themselves on the mountains, causing the grass to spring, and providing thereby plenty of food for all animals, the meanest and most useless of which are not forgotten or neglected; but even the cry of the young ravens is heard and answered. *Note;* (1.) The clouds of affliction, when darkest, serve but to prepare us for greater fruitfulness in our souls. (2.) If the raven's cry is heard, surely our prayer shall not be disregarded; he who feedeth them, will much more provide all needful supplies for his own people. For,

6. In them is his delight, and therefore they owe him praise. *God delights not in the strength of the horse, or in any man's legs:* the finest cavalry, or the firmest infantry, are vain things to save a man without God's blessing; but *the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, and in those that hope in his mercy*; filial fear and holy hope being the distinguishing characters of God's people.

2dly, Jerusalem and Zion, the figures of the gospel-church, are called upon to praise the Lord their God,

1. For their prosperity under the divine protection. *He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates:* his salvation, his power, and faithfulness, stronger than walls and bulwarks, surround his believing people. *He hath blessed thy children within thee*—the spiritual seed of the church begotten through the ministry of the gospel, and enriched with all the spiritual blessings of grace in Christ Jesus. *He maketh peace in thy borders*; quieting all his Zion's enemies without, and bestowing abundance of peace within; spiritual peace in their souls, and great union and harmony among each other; and *filleth thee with the finest of the wheat*; all needful temporal good, or the bread of life in the gospel, by which the souls of believers are supported and strengthened. Mercies inestimable! and calling for louder praise than any merely temporal good vouchsafed to the inhabitants of Judæa.

2. For God's providential government in the kingdom of nature. *He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth*, and his will all things obey. *His word runneth very swiftly*: he speaks, and it is done; which may respect either the word of his providence

P S A L. CXLVIII.

The Psalmist exhorteth the celestial, the terrestrial, and the rational creatures to praise God.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights.

2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.

providence, directing the rain and the snow to fall; or the word of his gospel, which by the preaching of the apostles was quickly spread through the world. *He giveth snow like wool, for whiteness, and conveys warmth to the earth on which it falls. He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes; the dew of night congealing, and covering, as ashes spread abroad, the plants and trees. He casteth forth his ice like morsels; either in hailstones that fall, or when the icicles shoot in the incruusted waters. Who can stand before his cold? the intenseness of which would instantly destroy us, if God was pleased to expose us to its extremity. He sendeth out his sword, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow, dissolving the ice and snow, and making the verdure and flowers of spring succeed to the cold and dreary scenes of winter. Note;* Like the frozen earth is the sinner's heart, till God's Spirit breathes upon it; then softened into deep contrition, the penitential tears begin to flow, and soon the whole soul puts on a new aspect, filled with the blossoms of grace and fruits of righteousness, which are, through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.

3. For that divine revelation, with which they were peculiarly favoured. *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.* Israel was peculiarly distinguished by those oracles of God committed to them, containing the promises and precepts, moral and ceremonial. *He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments they have not known them:* as therefore peculiarly favoured of heaven, they of all others were bound to fidelity, blessing, and praise. *Note;* The case is our own: this happy land enjoys in its purity the gospel-word: may we know our mercies, improve them, and be thankful; lest, by the neglect of our Bibles, it should be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than for us!

P S A L. CXLVIII.

THIS too is a psalm of praise; in which the author calls upon heaven and earth, with all that is in them, to praise God. The last verse seems to shew that it was occasioned by some victory granted to his people. Many expositors have thought that David composed this psalm when his kingdom was in a very flourishing condition, and when God had given him rest from all his enemies. See ver. 14. and 2 Sam. vii. 1. Bishop Lowth, speaking of the origin of the Ode, observes, that it had its birth from the most pleasing affections of the human soul, joy, love, admiration. If we contemplate man in his state of innocence, newly created, such as the sacred scriptures exhibit

3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.

6 He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

him to us, endued with the perfect power of reason and speech; neither ignorant of himself, nor of God; conscious of the divine goodness, majesty, and power; no unworthy spectator of the beautiful fabric of the universe, the earth, and the heavens; can we suppose that at the sight of all these things his heart would not so burn within him, that his mind, carried away by the warmth of his affections, would of its own accord pour itself forth in the praise of its Creator, and glow into that impetuosity of speech, and that exultation of voice, which almost necessarily follows such emotions of mind. This seems to have been exactly the case, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, with the contemplative author of this beautiful psalm, wherein all created things are called upon to celebrate together the glory of God. *Praise ye the Lord, &c.* a hymn, which our Milton, by far the most divine of poets after the sacred ones, has most elegantly imitated, and very aptly given to Adam in Paradise. (See Paradise Lost, book v. ver. 153, &c. and Bishop Newton's notes). Indeed we can scarcely conceive rightly of that primæval and perfect state of man, unless we allow him some use of poetry, whereby he might worthily express in hymns and songs his piety and affection towards God. See the 25th Prelection

Ver. 3. Praise ye him, sun and moon] The Psalmist proceeds to call upon the inanimate part of the creation, as well as upon all living creatures, to praise the Lord; who hath set forth his most transcendent wisdom, power, and magnificence, in such a variety of stupendous works, that there is not the smallest of them but ministers such matter of praise and admiration to those who attentively consider them, that they cannot but wish, with the Psalmist here, that every one of them were able to tell us how much skill he hath shewn in their contrivance; or that we were able to find it out and fully comprehend it. Thus the Psalmist is to be understood, when he calls upon all creatures to praise the Lord. By the expression of *heavens of heavens*, in the next verse, is not meant, as usually, the highest heaven, the place of God's throne; but here, after the *sun, moon, and stars of light*, by which the whole body and sphere of the heavens are signified, follow next the *heavens of heavens*, and the *waters above the heavens*; where, as, in all reason, heavens of heavens, are but the highest of those heavens, above some part of which the *waters* are to be placed; so, in case the waters be no higher than that region of air where the clouds are, the uppermost regions of the body of air must be resolved to be what is here meant by the *heavens of heavens*.

Ver. 6. He hath also established them] That is, the creatures before mentioned, are, by God's providence, constantly pre-

7 Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:

8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

9 Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:

10 Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:

11 Kings of the earth, and all people: princes, and all judges of the earth:

12 Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD:

for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.

14 He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; *even* of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

P S A L. CXLIX.

The prophet exhorteth to praise God for his love to the church, and for that power which he hath given to it.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, *and* his praise in the congregation of saints.

served and continued. *He made a decree, &c.* that is, prescribed rules to the heavens, the stars, and other creatures, as to their situation, motion and influence; which, though inanimate, they never transgress.

Ver. 7. Praise the Lord from the earth] Praise the Lord, ye [or ye creatures] of the earth; ye sea-animals, or crocodiles, or whales, &c. And so the first verse should be rendered, *praise the Lord, ye* [or ye inhabitants] of the heavens; which are first enumerated, and then from this verse, the inhabitants of the earth. See Delaney's Life of David, book i. chap. 17.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Psalmist calls on heaven to begin the hallelujah, and earth must echo back the sound.

1. The heavens, and angelic hosts who them inhabit, the first of God's creation, who in the heights of glory nearest approach his throne of light inaccessible, are addressed, as those who with the most exalted praises should lead the song. Not that these bright spirits are backward to the work, or silent, day or night, in the delightful service; but the Psalmist would express the fervency of his own desires, that God should be glorified by the highest and noblest of his creatures; and would stir up himself and others to the work, which is the happiness and employment of all these sons of God in glory. *Note*; We in nothing more resemble angels, than when we sing the high praises of our God.

2. Not only the intellectual beings of the upper world, but the creatures void of reason, must shew forth his praise. Those orbs of light, that shed on this earth their benign influences; the sun, the moon, and glittering stars, shine audibly, and in the ear of enlightened reason proclaim aloud the glory of their great Creator. *Praise him, ye heavens of heavens; and, ye waters that be above the heavens, divided by the firmament from the waters beneath, all must praise the name of the Lord*; for by his power they were made, by his providence they are upheld, and their duration is fixed by him.

2dly, From the celestial world and upper regions the Psalmist descends to this terrestrial globe, from which a tribute of praise should ascend from every creature, whether intelligent, irrational, or inanimate.

1. The sea and its inhabitants are called on to praise

the Lord. *The dragons, or whales, and all deeps*; the shoals of fish that swim beneath the waters, from the least unto the greatest, declare their Maker's work.

2. The meteors of the sky, and exhalations, *fire, hail, snow, vapours, stormy winds*, all fulfil his word, go forth a this bidding, and are stayed at his command.

3. The earth, and all that dwell therein; mountains, hills, fruitful trees, and cedars; creatures though inanimate, rise up to praise him; while every beast of the forest, the lowing herds, the bleating flocks, and every reptile, and every flying fowl, join in their adoration, all admirably suited for the station they fill, and corresponding with their Maker's great design.

4. The rational creatures, endowed with speech, that as the tongue of this lower world they might present the tribute of all the creatures, are enjoined to raise the song. High and low, rich and poor, young and old, of either sex, must unite their praises. None so great as to be excused, none so low as to be despised, from lisping infancy to decrepit age. And reason good there is for so doing; *for his name alone is excellent*; none like him, none to compare with him: *his glory is above the earth and heaven*, exalted far above all blessing and praise which the creatures in both can render.

5. From his Israel he hath especial demands of gratitude. They are his *people, exalted* to the highest state of dignity, even to be called *saints*, and *brought near unto him*, in a covenant of grace through the Redeemer; admitted into a state of communion with him, and enjoying the distinguishing tokens of his favour; and therefore most justly doth he deserve to be their *praise*, the great and glorious object of it in time and in eternity. Amen. Hallelujah.

P S A L. CXLIX.

THIS psalm appears to have been composed upon some signal victory, and some great exploits done by the Jews; and therefore probably relates to the times of David, when they made the greatest figure, and gained the most considerable victories.

Ver. 1. A new song] St. Chrysostome commenting on this place gives us an account of the meaning of a *new song*, which, according to the use of the word *new* in other places, (when the Hebrews would express a thing very wonderful, such as had not been seen or heard of before,

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2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him : let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

3 Let them praise his name in the dance : let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people : he will beautify the meek with salvation.

5 Let the saints be joyful in glory : let them sing aloud upon their beds.

6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand ;

7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people ;

8 To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron ;

9 To execute upon them the judgment written : this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

as Numb. xvi. 31., Jerem. xxxi. 22.) he takes to denote an illustrious and celebrated hymn, made for great victories or achievements.

Ver. 3. Let them praise his name in the dance] In order to vindicate the Scriptures of the Old Testament from the charge of encouraging or even tolerating the dances which are practised in modern times, and which are in perfect contrariety to communion with God, and of course to the spirit of true religion, I think it necessary to make the following remarks on the *sacred dances* of the Hebrews. The different customs of different nations, always varying from each other, and even from themselves at different times, make it utterly impracticable, especially at this distance of time, to give any satisfactory account of the mode in which the *sacred dances* of the Hebrews were conducted : and it is the more so, because the modern usage has appropriated and confined this practice only to entertainments of levity and gaiety, so as to make the ideas of solemnity and gravity wholly contrary to, and inconsistent with, that of dancing. It is certain, however, that the *ancient Hebrews*, upon the greatest occasions of joy and triumph, did use the *solemn dance*. Different companies of them, as they excelled in different ways, did jointly contribute, according to their respective abilities, to express the general joy : and while some assisted at the *national ceremony* with *vocal* and some with *instrumental music*, others performed the *solemn dance*. The first mention which we find made of this in scripture, is as early as the days of Moses, upon the deliverance from Pharaoh ; when Miriam, Moses's sister, sang the ode which her brother had composed upon that occasion ; and she took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances, Exod. xv. 20, 21. Thus Jephtha's daughter came to welcome her father upon his successful return from battle, with timbrels and dances, Judg. xi. 34. ; and that this custom continued to the time of David, appears not only from this verse, and ver. 4. of the following psalm, but from what is said of his own conduct in this way, when he brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom, to mount Zion. Upon that most solemn occasion, we find that he divested himself of his royal robes, and being clothed in a robe of fine linen, and with a shorter garment, a linen ephod, girt about him over that, he danced before the ark. Compare 2 Sam. vi. with 1 Chron. xv. 25, &c. From these observations it is evident, that the solemn dances of the ancient Hebrews, which are mentioned in scripture, have no similarity with the dances

of modern times, which are almost necessarily accompanied with extreme levity and carnal gaiety.

Ver. 4. He will beautify the meek] i. e. " Will deliver " those who meekly depend upon him, and will make " them as great and illustrious, as they had been con- " temptible and mean." See 1 Chron. xiv. 2. Mudge renders it, *He decorateth the humble with victory*.

Ver. 5. Let the saints be joyful in glory, &c.] *Let the favoured ones exult in their heart*. It is frequent with the Psalmist to call upon כבודו *kebedo*, his *soul*, or *heart*, all that is within him, to praise the Lord ; and therefore, as it is here joined with *singing upon their beds*, it seems to justify the translation given. As above he had called upon them to public joy, so here he calls them to rejoice within themselves while they were on their beds. Mudge. Possibly their *beds* here means nothing more than the *couches* on which they reclined while they partook of the sacrifice offered in thanksgiving for their victory.

Ver. 6. Let the high praises, &c.] That is, " Let them " not, however, lay aside all thoughts of warlike prepara- " tions, and be drowned in the ease of a sluggish peace ; " but let them, at the same time that they are singing " victorious hymns to the honour of God, be in readiness " to oppose, and gain fresh victories over, the heathen, " who are still his and their enemies. Mudge renders this verse in the imperfect tense : *The exaltation of God was in their mouth, &c.* Jehoshaphat marched out to meet the enemy, with the Levites singing psalms before him. See the 8th verse verified, Judg. i. 7.

Ver. 9. To execute upon them the judgment] i. e. " The " judgment which God hath long ago decreed, and which " is recorded in his law." There should be a full stop at *written*. The next clause is general ; *Such honour have all his saints* : i. e. " Such is the honour which Israel shall " have ; and such shall be their glorious victories, while " they are in favour with God."

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The contemplation of new wonders of God's hand calls for a new song of praise. The place appointed is *the congregation of the saints* ; for when we assemble for public worship, praise is the noblest part of the service, and all should join therein. *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, or in his Maker*, the Eternal Three, whose work it is not only to make the persons, or to form the people of Israel into a nation, but to create in righteousness and true holiness the spiritual Israel, which is the most enlarged matter of

OUR

P S A L. CL.

An exhortation to praise God with all kinds of instruments.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise

him according to his excellent greatness.

3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.

4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise

our joy; and let the children of Zion, the living members of Christ's church, be joyful in their king, Messiah, exalted to the throne of glory, and ever living to bless and make his faithful people happy. Let them, these believing souls, praise his name in the sacred dance, which on solemn occasions was used; or with the pipe: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp, as expressive of that sweeter melody which they made unto God in their hearts, and without which the other were but profanation. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: they are his in the Son of his love; he admits them into communion with himself, accepts their services, and delights in their persons. He will beautify the meek with salvation, who, lowly in their own eyes, are led to Jesus for salvation. Therefore let the saints, for this is their honoured character, however in the world the name be ridiculed, let the saints be joyful in glory; adorned as they are, and in hope of what they shall be; or gloriously, with exceeding great joy. Let them sing aloud upon their beds, not ashamed of being heard, but triumphing in the salvation of God, when they awake at midnight, when they lie on beds of sickness, or go down to the dust of death; and well may they sing who have nothing to fear, every thing to hope, every foe vanquished, the sting of death removed, the gates of heaven opened, and glory, honour, and immortality in full prospect before them. Lord, give me to share in this felicity of thy faithful people! Open thou my mouth, and my lips shall shew forth thy praise!

2dly, The victories of God's Israel are great and distinguished, and therefore their praises are loud and joyful. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, or, the high things, his glorious perfections, which are to be celebrated by them; and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; either literally to avenge the wrongs done to God's people by the neighbouring nations, now justly smitten with the irresistible sword of David and his army; or, spiritually it may be interpreted of the sword of the Spirit, Eph. vi. 17., Heb. vi. 12. which is sharp and piercing, convincing the conscience of sin, cutting down all self-righteousness, and threatening eternal death to the soul. With this word in their mouths the apostles and preachers went forth, to fight against heathen idolatry and superstition, and to rebuke the people for their abominations: and the powerful effects of it soon appeared in the demolition of the idols and their temples, and the conversion of the Gentiles to God, who turned at their reproof: To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron, as Joshua and David had done by their conquered foes: or rather, as Christ hath done, and will do, by his enemies, binding Satan in chains from hurting his faithful people, and de-

stroying the antichristian powers that oppress them: or by the effectual power of his grace, drawing the hearts of sinners, even some of highest rank, in chains of love to him, stronger than fetters of iron. To execute upon them the judgment written; on the nations of Canaan, (see Deut. vii. 2.) or rather, upon all the enemies of Christ and his people, who reject the warnings of his word, and therefore must perish everlastingly, Mark, xvi. 16. This honour have all his saints; all the blessings recited in this psalm belong to the faithful; they shall be glorious in the eyes of God; rejoice in his salvation; and, sitting down with Christ on his throne, see all their enemies at the last become their footstool; and in the prospect of that great day they may well cry, Hallelujah!

P S A L. CL.

THIS is likewise a psalm of praise, in which the author calls upon men to magnify the Lord in every thing in which he chose principally to manifest his glory; and upon every kind of instrument. See the title to the fourth psalm.

Ver. 1. Praise God in his sanctuary] Or, *In his holiness*; i. e. "For the inexpressible purity and holiness of his nature." *In the firmament of his power*, means, "For the vast extent of his power, which is expanded and diffused over all his works." Mudge renders it, *Praise him in the expanse of his strength*.

Ver. 5. Praise him upon the loud cymbals] *With the voice-cymbals*. Mudge. The two kinds of cymbals, says he, seem one to be soft and low, and therefore to admit a voice to be heard; from whence the name: the other to be high and loud. But very frank and honest is the confession of Aben-ezra upon this subject. "We have no way to know what several of these musical instruments were; there being many to be found in the country of the Ishmaelites (i. e. Mahometans), which are not among the men of Edom; i. e. Christians; and others among them, which the wise men of Israel never heard of." It may be proper just to observe, that the Vulgate and other versions add another psalm at the end of this book; which they tell us in the title was written by David when he went to engage with Goliath. But the composition is evidently apocryphal, and unworthy the pen of David. See Chandler, vol. i. p. 70.

"The book of psalms," observes Mr. Locke, "has in it a greater number of prophecies than any other book of the Old Testament. We cannot be mistaken in following the sense which the authors of the New Testament have fixed upon the psalms; who generally understood them in the same sense in which they were received among the Jews. Many psalms do so visibly mention the glory

him upon the high-sounding cymbals.

6 Let every thing that hath breath praise

the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

“ of the kingdom of the Messiah, after the destruction of
 “ the Antichrist, and the calling of all nations, who before
 “ never heard of the gospel, that the very Jews do under-
 “ stand them accordingly. Such, in their opinion, are the
 “ 10th psalm and following, to the 101st; and their
 “ testimony about the sense of these psalms may well be
 “ taken for a prescription against the pretended allegories
 “ which many commentators find in them, as if those
 “ psalms had been fulfilled already. Where the coming
 “ of the Messiah is spoken of, the psalms that mention it
 “ are commonly understood of his first coming, though
 “ both his coming the first and second time are often joined
 “ together. This may be seen in the 22d psalm, and in
 “ the 2d chapter of Isaiah, where both comings are put
 “ together, as if but one; though St. Paul has exactly
 “ distinguished them, 2 Theff. ii., Isaiah having marked
 “ out by the name of *the wicked one*, him whom Christ
 “ is to destroy at his second coming, as St. Paul ex-
 “ plained it, and the Jews do acknowledge. It is plain
 “ that a great many psalms, where mention is made of
 “ his destruction, and where the church prays for it,
 “ do particularly concern the church and the Jews to-
 “ gether: the Christian church, which shall then be delivered
 “ from the tyranny of her persecutors; and the Jews who
 “ are to be called again after the destruction of the Anti-
 “ christian kingdom. It cannot be doubted but that the
 “ psalms, where mention is made of the promise to the
 “ patriarchs, and where the fulfilling of them is prayed
 “ for, do peculiarly relate to the Jews in their last dis-
 “ position: so that if the Christian church sings them, she
 “ must look on them as so many tokens that God will one
 “ day call the Jews again. *The poor—the afflicted—the*
 “ *remnant*—do commonly signify the Jews. Mention is
 “ made in many psalms of Edom, as the oppressor of the
 “ Christian church, and the Jewish church too. The
 “ following prophets do clearly intimate that this ought
 “ to be understood of Rome, and her antichristian king-
 “ dom; from which it plainly appears, that those psalms
 “ ought accordingly to be so understood which men-
 “ tion the violence of Edom, and the destruction of
 “ Idumea.”

REFLECTIONS.—Thirteen times in the compass of six short verses does the Psalmist repeat the exhortation to praise. His own heart glowed with gratitude; he would inculcate upon us the great and delightful duty of praise; and, because our cold hearts are so backward, he would rouse us from our lethargy, and stir us up to join his songs. Observe,

1. Where God's praise is to be expected. *In his sanctuary* below, where his worshipping servants must unite their voices to adore his name; or, *in his holy one*, Christ Jesus, for whom, and through whom, all the sacrifices of his people's praises ascend, and are accepted before God; and *in the firmament of his power*, above, where angels ceaseless adore him, and all glorified saints will shortly join them in this happy service.

2. Abundant reason there is for praising him, because of his mighty acts of creation, providence, redemption, and grace, wherein his excellent greatness, or the multitude of his greatness, appears: excellence above conception, and greatness so surpassing, that all our praises come infinitely short of his glory; yea, the highest angels, after their most enlarged adorations, own him far exalted above all blessing and praise.

3. The manner of our praises. With all melody in our hearts, and sacred joy, of which these instruments of music that were used in the service of the sanctuary, were typical: and as the union of various sounds and instruments heightens the harmony, so must the people of God united in love, unite their voices, with one mind and one mouth glorifying God.

4. Who must praise? *Every thing that hath breath.* The brute creation, though not with voice articulate, speak his praise. The sons of men throughout the world are called upon to use that speech which God hath given them, in this best employment of it; especially the living souls, quickened by the Eternal Spirit, have peculiar cause of praise, whether considering the distinguished privileges that they enjoy, or the greater glories which are before them. In heaven whither we are going, all will be praise. It is good to begin the happy service here, and antedate our joys; then, when our moment here below shall end, and this faltering tongue, unable longer to sustain the notes, is silent on the bed of death, borne upon angels' wings our souls shall take their flight, and with enraptured exultation join the hallelujahs of the sky. Amen, and Amen!

We shall conclude our observations on the *Book of Psalms* with some general remarks on the use of the psalms in every condition of life; for which we are principally indebted to the excellent Dissertation prefixed by the learned Bishop Bossuet to his Exposition of this book. St. Athanasius has observed, that the Psalms are accommodated to all our spiritual wants, principally on three accounts. In the first place, as the other books of scripture treat of one particular subject, the psalms comprehend every thing; history, customs, the law; Christ, his acts, and mysteries, and all parts of the Old and New Testament. Secondly, we may behold in the Psalms a picture of human life, with examples of every turn of good and evil; for David is proposed as a lesson to all: a mean shepherd; a king chosen by God; a conqueror in single combat; a commander in battle; the king's son-in-law, and the ornament of the court: afterwards an exile from his incensed monarch; destitute, and without settlement, either among his countrymen, or strangers. Further, the same David, in possession of the throne, established in a kingdom enlarged by his numerous victories, becomes once more a despised fugitive from the persecution of a favourite son: in every respect an instance of the instability of human things; and, as himself expresses it, *a monster unto many*. He experienced almost every change of life; the faithful friendship and the bitter enmities of kings; the changeable

humour

humour of the populace; the insincerity of friends, and the enmity even of his son: surrounded with danger both abroad and at home, but bearing all with submission to Divine providence, and therefore without despondence and dismay. But why do we mention mere human things! even things divine are liable to vicissitudes, through the inconstancy not of *God* but of *man*. Behold, for example, the holy David, falling from integrity and rectitude to guilt, and then repenting of his transgressions; teaching us what regard God always shews to the pure and uncorrupted mind; how dreadful in his anger, but how compassionate and merciful to the returning sinner. By making these things the subjects of our meditation, and accommodating the circumstances of David to our own case, we shall make one proper use of this divine book, and thus advance in true piety. We observe, as a *third* particular, that all the affections of the mind are to be seen in David; such, I mean, as are suited to every condition: for neither David, nor any other man of true piety, ever affected the absurd and fictitious apathy of the stoics. Hope and fear, joy and grief, are displayed in the liveliest colours throughout this admirable book. But to what end? Doubtless, that through Almighty grace the passions may be purified, and rendered subservient to God: that hope may be drawn from human things, and taught to rely upon him: that fear and grief, under the operations of the Divine Spirit, may, when we are in trouble, subdue our pride, and recal to our memory God the avenger: that joy may be restored to its genuine use, which is, to triumph in the God of our salvation. Such is the excellency of the Psalms, that whereas other books of scripture teach us to love God, to pray to him, to implore his mercy, to bewail our sins, and to repent of them; they furnish us with forms of prayer, of confession and rejoicings; and in every state of received, lost, or recovered grace, teach us such things as

are pleasing to God. For instance; hath any one received a blessing? in the Psalms he has a thanksgiving. Hath he any thing to be requested? in the Psalms he has a petition. Hath he any evil to be removed? in the Psalms he has a deprecation. Would he delight his soul in meditations? in the Psalms the scenes of creation and providence are opened in beautiful representations. Would he humble his soul in humiliations? in the Psalms he finds many that are penitential. See *Bisse's Beauty of Holiness*, p. 45. Instructed in these points, Christian reader, proceed to understand and to sing the Psalms; proceed to sing unto the Lord: and, that you may do this with propriety, be influenced by the inmost sentiments of the Psalmist; weigh well his words, and adapt yourself to them. We must not omit to observe, that the Psalms seem most agreeable, and brightened with the divinest light, when we understand that the head and the members, Christ and his church, are either openly displayed, or covertly pointed out in them; nor need we on this account deviate from the historical, or literal, and immediate sense: nay, the hidden meaning will be so much the more clear and settled, the more certainly we determine on the type; that is, the history and the letter. Let us therefore awaken all our attention; and when we read of *David* and *Solomon*, together with the enemies of David, *Saul*, *Ahithophel*, and others; when we read of *war* or *peace*, captivity, liberty, and other events of that nature; then let us elevate our thoughts to Christ, our great and triumphant sufferer; to his church, exercised among labours and perils, wandering in adversity and prosperity; to the persecutors of the saints, not only visible but invisible; to the continual warfare of this life, and to that eternal kingdom of rest and peace which will succeed it; and whither *the forerunner is for us entered, even JESUS, made an high-priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.*

THE
P R O V E R B S.

Within the period from the building to the destruction of the temple, literature received a considerable advance, probably by means of the schools of the prophets. Solomon was a great author, as he was endowed with an uncommon share of wisdom: For he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five; and he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes. But of all his works only three are taken into the sacred Canon, namely, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and his Song. The Book of Proverbs consists of the most useful rules for the right direction of life, in religion and morals; and is the most authentic and excellent of the kind that can be produced in antiquity. It may be divided into five parts. I. In the first part the tutor gives his pupil admonitions, directions, cautions, and excitements to the study of wisdom, chap. i. to x. II. The second part contains the Proverbs of Solomon, properly so called; delivered in distinct, independent, general sentences, chap. x. to xxii. ver. 17. III. In the third part the tutor again addresses himself to his pupil, and gives him fresh admonitions to the diligent study of wisdom; which is followed by a set of instructions, delivered in the imperative mood to the pupil, who is supposed all the while to be standing before him, chap. xxii. 17. to chap. xxv. IV. The fourth part is distinguished by its being a collection of Solomon's Proverbs, selected, we may suppose, out of a much greater number, by the men of Hezekiah; perhaps by the prophets Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah, who all flourished in the days of Hezekiah, and, not improbably, assisted him in his pious endeavours to restore true religion, 2 Chron. xxxi. 20, 21. This part, like the second, consists chiefly of distinct unconnected sentences, and reaches from chap. xxv. to chap. xxx. V. The fifth part contains a set of wise observations and instructions which Agur, the son of Jakeb, delivered to his pupils Ithiel and Ucal, chap. xxx. And the 31st chapter contains the precepts which his mother delivered to Lemuel her son; being passionately desirous to guard him against vice, to establish him in the principles of justice, and to have him married to a wife of the best qualities. These two chapters are a kind of appendix to the book of Proverbs. See Taylor's Scripture Divinity. Respecting the meaning of the word מִשְׁלֵי mishlei, or proverbs, see Numb. xxi. 27. Job, xxvii. 1. It is generally thought, that the Proverbs of Solomon, as we now have them, are the compilation of the wise sayings of that king, made at different times, and by different persons, and collected together by Esdras, or by those who revised the sacred books after the Babylonish captivity. This may account for the frequent repetitions found in this work; for those proverbs which occur in some of the versions, though not in the Hebrew; and, in some measure, for the variation of the Hebrew, in many places, from the most ancient versions. But for more on this subject we refer to Calmet's preface.

C H A P. I.

The use of the Proverbs. An exhortation to fear God and believe his word: to avoid the enticings of sinners. Wisdom complaineth of contempt: she threateneth her contemners.

THE proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;

- 2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;
- 3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;
- 4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels :

6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

7 ¶ The fear of the LORD is the beginning

of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother :

9 For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. The Proverbs of Solomon] Solomon is the first of the sacred writers whose name appears at the head of his works. The name alone of so wise and so great a prince, is a sufficient recommendation to engage men to hear and to read. We naturally love to see and to listen to persons of illustrious name and extraordinary capacity; particularly when those qualities are joined with sovereign power. The style of his work, the brevity of his sentences, and the parabolical turn, close, short, sententious, are also reasons for studying it; long discourses fatigue; all men have not leisure to attend to, or penetration to comprehend them. But precepts delivered in parable are always pleasing to hear. It is generally known, that this method of treating the most serious subjects was very common and familiar with the Jews. Jesus Christ, for the most part, delivered his instructions to the people in parables. See Matt. xiii. 3. &c. xxiv. 34. In short, they serve well to teach wisdom, truth, and justice; and to caution men against error, vice, and dissipation. Calmet. Bishop Warburton observes, that short isolated sentences were the mode in which ancient wisdom delighted to convey its precepts, for the regulation of human conduct: but when this natural method had lost the grace of novelty, and a growing refinement had new coloured the candid simplicity of ancient manners, these instructive fables found a necessity of giving to their moral maxims the seasoning and poignancy of paradoxes. In these the son of David, we are told, most excelled. We find them to abound in the writings which bear his name, and we meet with frequent allusions to them in all the parts of Sacred Writ, under the name of *riddles, parables, and dark sayings*.

Ver. 2. To know wisdom—to perceive] To give the knowledge of wisdom—the perception of, &c. and so on. The first six verses contain the author's design; wherein he uses several synonymous words to express the matter of which he intends to treat, as *wisdom, instruction, understanding, knowledge, &c.* By which he means instructions proper to form the mind; particularly those which respect youth, and which serve to correct and repress the fallies of their passions and humours. The first principle he lays down is, that a due sense of God is a most necessary qualification to enable one to profit by these instructions; teaching us, that our principal care must be to possess our minds with a lively sense of the being, wisdom, power, and goodness of God. This is the first step to wisdom; and the second is, to bear a high reverence to parents, both natural and spiritual, ver. 8. One of the first things that parents should take care of is, to teach their children to avoid evil company, ver. 10.; to represent vice in its true light, ver. 11, &c.; and to admonish them to hearken to the voice of wisdom, ver. 20. In short, in this chapter he introduces

Wisdom speaking to her son, or to her children in general; inviting them to love her, and by no means to tread in the way of sinners, but to keep close to her directions; threatening destruction to those who condemn this counsel. See Bishop Patrick and Calmet.

Ver. 3. To receive the instruction] Or, to learn the discipline. Schultens paraphrases the clause thus: "To conceive and cherish in the inmost heart, as a heavenly seed, the discipline of perfection, by which both thy prudence and happiness may be completed." According to Grotius, by justice is meant whatever is comprehended under the idea of benevolence or goodness: By judgment, that branch of justice which may be termed commercial, or distributive, and which relates to contracts and their violation; and by equity is understood every other branch of justice which relates to any virtue, and is generally implied by the term *rectitude*.

Ver. 6. To understand a proverb, &c.] By understanding a proverb, or, That he may understand a proverb. Schultens and Houb. "My lessons," says Wisdom, "will discover to him the sense of parables and enigmas." This study was very much the fashion in Solomon's time, as appears plainly from the queen of Sheba's visit to him. See 1 Kings, x. 1. and Ecclus. xxxix. 2.

Ver. 7. The fear of the Lord] See Ps. cxi. 10. As the first lesson, the wise man tells us, that the fear of the Lord is the principle of wisdom. All wisdom which is not founded in religion, in the fear of God, is vain: piety, religion, the fear of God, are here synonymous. The prudence of the flesh, the policy of the world, knowledge raised from the things of earth, the barren science of the curiosities of nature; all this is not wisdom, because it may be without the fear of God, and true wisdom is founded only upon this fear. Some translate it, *the principal point of wisdom is the fear of God*: Piety, virtue, true wisdom, is principally founded upon the fear of the Lord: but the former sense is more clear and natural. This sentence is frequent in the Scriptures; and St. Augustin in Ep. Johan. tract. ix. often inculcates it; shewing, that fear prepares the way for the love of justice, which is perfect wisdom. Calmet.

Ver. 8. My son, hear, &c.] It is very observable, how much human laws differ from divine. The former generally provides only that due regard be given by children to their fathers, but takes no notice of mothers; as may be seen in the *Persian* laws mentioned by Aristotle: the *Roman*, described in the Digests and Constitutions, and several passages of the Greek philosophers which we find in Epictetus and Simplicius, who consult only the honour of the father. But God, in his law, takes care to secure a just reverence to both parents, as we find in many parts of this book. See the first sixteen verses of the third chapter of Ecclesiasticus.

Ver.

10 ¶ My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

11 If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause :

12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave ; and whole, as those that go down into the pit :

13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil :

14 Cast in thy lot among us ; let us all have one purse.

15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them ; refrain thy foot from their path :

16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

17 Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

18 And they lay wait for their *own* blood ; they lurk privily for their *own* lives.

19 So *are* the ways of every one that is greedy of gain ; *which* taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

20 ¶ Wisdom crieth without ; she uttereth her voice in the streets :

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates : in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*,

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity ? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge ?

23 Turn you at my reproof : behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

24 ¶ Because I have called and ye refused ;

Ver. 17. Surely in vain, &c.] The Syriac, which omits ver. 16., connects this with the 15th verse in this manner ; *And they fraudulently stretch and cast their net upon the bird.* It reads, *For the nets are not spread for the birds in vain :* the LXX read *unjustly* instead of *in vain* ; but that version seems forced and unnatural. For though it must be confessed, that the Hebrew word generally has this signification ; yet that it also signifies *in vain*, appears from Ezek. vi. 10. The proverb then is a tacit reflection upon the obstinacy and infatuation of those persons, *qui vivi viventes pereunt*, who will not be warned by any sight or sense of their danger to avoid it ; and who in this respect act with less prudence and caution than the very birds themselves, who will not fall into the net which is spread before them. See Dr. Grey's notes on the Proverbs. Other and different senses are given of this proverb ; but, says Calmet, I prefer this : *The wicked make haste to shed blood, and unjustly spread their nets before the birds ;* " They take the just by surprise, as they would take birds." Schultens, however, thinks that this verse connects with the following one, thus ; " There is no bird so stupid as to fly into a net spread immediately before its eyes ; but these abandoned sinners spread with their own hands, immediately before their own eyes, those nets by which they willingly involve themselves in certain death and ruin : for they who lay snares for the blood of the innocent lay snares for themselves ; and they who desire to swallow up the virtuous alive, as the grave, will themselves be swallowed up in that grave, and plunged in destruction."

Ver. 19. The life of the owners thereof] The Hebrew is not well translated here ; בעל *bangal*, which often occurs in this book, signifies not only being *lord* or *owner* of a thing, but also under the dominion of it ; given or addicted to it. So chap. xviii. 9. בעל לשון *bangal lishon*, signifies a *talkative person* ; בעל נפש *bangal nepesh*, chap. xxiii. 2. one given to appetite : בעל אף *bangal ap*, a *hasty*, or *passionate man* : chap. xxii. 24. So also chap. xvii. 8. *A gift is as a precious stone in the hands* בעליו *bealiv*, of the owners thereof ;

i. e. of those who love bribes. Grey. Schultens renders the clause, *It taketh away the life of those that take it.*

Ver. 20. Wisdom crieth without, &c.] *Wisdom elevates her voice in the streets. She uttereth forth her voice in the public places.* Schultens and Calmet. Solomon opposes the voice of wisdom and her agreeable invitations to the seducing discourse of sinners. " The latter lay snares for you in secret ; they conceal themselves the better to deceive. " Wisdom, on the contrary, listeth up her voice in the streets and public places ; she does not invite to murders, to violence, to injustice, to crimes commonly fatal to those who commit them ; but to God, and to the highest good : " She discovers the ways which lead to the extremest misery, in order to avoid it ; she recalls men from their errors, and threatens them with ruin if they despise her." By saying that wisdom lifts up her voice in the public places, Solomon prevents the poor excuse of those who would ask, where shall they find this wisdom ? She is every where : all that surrounds us preaches up to us this wisdom. We need only open our eyes and ears. Do you behold evil, scandal, disorder ? avoid doing it. Do you hear good discourses, do you see good examples ? hear, imitate, and profit by them : the wise learn much more from fools, says Cato, than fools learn from the wise.

Ver. 21. In the chief place of concourse] *On the tops of the walls*, according to the LXX ; which Houbigant and Dr. Grey approve. Schultens renders it, *at the head or beginning of the most frequented streets.*

Ver. 23. Behold I will pour out, &c.] *I will communicate my spirit to you, and cause you to comprehend my words.* " I will open my heart, explain my sentiments, set my counsels before your eyes : I demand only your attention, and your sincere return to me, to truth, to wisdom." The Hebrew is literally, *If you return at my instruction ; or, if you turn your face at my correction ;* " I will make my spirit flow upon you, as a source or fountain which produces its water." Schultens says, the force of the Hebrew

I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the LORD:

30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Hebrew word is, **נבא** nabang, *ebullire, ebullium vobis Spiritum meum. I will make my Spirit ebulliate upon you; See Psal. lix. 7.*

Ver. 31. *And be filled]* Or, *And shall be forfeited.*

Ver. 32. *For the turning away of the simple]* The *simple, the unfeeling*: The men who have neglected my instructions, and who have been so void of reason as to deliver themselves up to the example and the advice of the wicked, shall be brought to death by their own folly: their prosperity, their happiness, their favour, shall be fatal to them; they shall perish by the very thing which they have sought for with so much earnestness. The Hebrew is **משבת** *mesbubath, the repose.* "The peace or tranquillity of the simple, of those who have suffered themselves to be deluded by the subtle enchantments of the wicked, shall slay them; and the prosperity, the felicity, the abundance of the inconsiderate, shall destroy them." The LXX give a very different sense, *They shall be slain, because they have unjustly oppressed the innocent; and the wicked shall perish by a rigorous examination.* See Calmet. Dr. Grey says, that *the prosperity of fools* should rather be rendered *the security of fools*; their tranquillity in a vicious course, which will nevertheless end in their destruction.

REFLECTIONS.—As diligently as we are warned to fly the enticements of sinners, so earnestly are we admonished to attend the calls and warnings of God.

We have,

1. The voice of wisdom crying in the streets, in the places of greatest concourse, and in the gates, that all who will may hear the divine admonitions. This wisdom, or wisdoms in the original, may be interpreted of the divine revelation in general, or rather signifies Christ Jesus, who is the person here speaking in the words of his everlasting gospel; rebuking the wickedness of those to whom he preached, and foretelling their dreadful doom. And this voice is still heard in the public ministration of the word; and these warnings are to us still equally needful, and the danger of neglecting them equally fatal. Note; They that perish under a preached gospel, are left peculiarly without excuse.

2. The words which wisdom utters. [1.] He exhortates, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? indulge your vain notions, and sport in your own deceivings, in*

hopes of mercy, unsupported by God's word, and in ways of folly which must end in misery: *and sinners delight in scorning; scoffing at serious godliness, and counting it high humour and wit to turn things sacred into ridicule; contemning religion as a mean, low thing, as the Scribes and Pharisees did the great Author of it: and fools hate knowledge; averse to hear the gospel-word, and choosing darkness rather than light. With such God bears long. He delighteth not indeed in the death of a sinner, and therefore, [2.] He exhorts them earnestly not to weary out his patience, or provoke his wrath. Turn ye at my reproof; attend to the calls of my word: and most encouraging is the invitation. Behold, sinner, and wonder, after all thy provocations, at the grace revealed in Jesus Christ who hath gifts even for the rebellious; Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, or upon you; upon some at least, if others continued impenitent, and would not hear. I will make known my words unto you; in general to all in the preaching of the gospel, so as to leave them inexcusable who reject it. [3.] He upbraids them with their impenitence, and hardness of heart: I have called, and ye refused; as the Jews rejected his word, and sinners continue to do; either by withdrawing from the place of hearing, or by their inattention there, or by their obstinacy notwithstanding every warning, persisting in their sins. I have stretched out my arm, and no man regarded; as Jesus did in the temple, and as his zealous ministers do in their importunate discourses, but to many with small effect; they continue a disobedient and gainaying people. Ye have set at nought all my counsel; the gospel of their salvation, which the Jews despised, and which the self-righteous and the careless sinner still reject: and would none of my reproof; would neither hear nor obey it; nay, they hated knowledge, ver. 29. and did not choose the fear of the Lord, but rather preferred the perverse ways of their own hearts. [4.] He, therefore, denounces their doom, which had a present fulfilment in the destruction of the Jewish people; and will most eminently be accomplished in the day of the final perdition of ungodly men. I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: come it will; pain and sickness will seize on their bodies, and terrors on their guilty souls. When your fear cometh as desolation, overwhelming as a flood; and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, sudden and irresistible; when distress and anguish cometh upon you, as was terribly*

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C H A P . II.

Wisdom promiseth godliness to her children, safety from evil company, and direction in good ways.

MY son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding.

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding.

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

felt in the siege of Jerusalem, and in the day of wrath will more fearfully overtake the impenitent sinner. Too late then it will be to cry for mercy, when the door is shut. Now prayer can avail, and God will hear the cries of the miserable; but *then*, says he, *shall they call upon me, but I will not answer*; deaf to their cries, though it were but for a drop of water to cool their flaming tongue. *They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me*; all their importunity is vain; the sentence is gone forth, the decree irrevocable, their damnation eternal: And this according to the strictest justice: they chose their own delusions, and were impenetrably hardened, v. 29, 30. *Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way*. Sin and suffering are inseparable: they who choose the one, must expect the other; and be filled with their own devices; in the ruin they have courted. Thus the Jews, who crucified Christ, were themselves miserably crucified, till trees were wanting to hang them on. *For the turning away of the simple shall slay them*: they who depart from Christ must perish; and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them, their possessions enabling them to give a loose to the gratifications of their appetites, and begetting that fatal security which is the prelude to ruin. Let sinners read these awful lines, and tremble. Reader, whosoever thou art, may they never be fulfilled in thee! [5.] He declares the blessedness of those who hear and obey the reproofs of God's word. *Whoso hearkeneth unto me, to Christ and his gospel, and yields up his heart to him, shall dwell safely*: no enemy shall approach to hurt him, neither Satan, sin, nor death. Sprinkled with the blood of Christ, he shall enjoy constant peace on earth, and in heaven his abode shall be for ever: *and shall be quiet from fear of evil*; entered into that eternal rest, which nothing can disturb, and which remaineth sure to all the faithful people of God. Lord, may this be my lot and portion!

C H A P . II.

Ver. 1. My son, if thou wilt receive, &c.] The attention of those who read this book being bespoken in the foregoing chapter, the wise man persuades not only to read, but to

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: *he is* a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; *yea*, every good path.

10 ¶ When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things:

13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to

receive and obey his good counsels, by representing the benefits of being wise, that is, holy and virtuous, and the mischiefs that a man shall thereby avoid. The chief is, that he is sure to be under the guidance and blessing of God, who will impart more and more of himself to those who study wisdom; which is the scope of the former part of this chapter: and as, on the contrary, if he do not order his ways by the rules of wisdom, he is sure to wander most dangerously; so, if he keep close to them, they will preserve him from utter ruin; which is the design of the latter part of them. See on ver. 12. and 18. Instead of *hide*, we may read *lay up*. Schultens renders the second verse, *By giving thine attentive ears to wisdom, thou wilt incline thine heart to prudence*.

Ver. 4. If thou seekest her as silver] This is thought to be a proverbial saying, borrowed from those who work in mines: The former part of the verse expressing eager desire and great diligence, and the latter invincible resolution and constant perseverance; though I see nothing proverbial in it, more than in many other similitudes, says Bishop Patrick.

Ver. 7. Sound wisdom] Or, *solid blessings*. The next clause is rendered by Houbigant, *He is a defence for those who act with simplicity and candour*; and by Schultens, *A shield to those who walk in integrity*.

Ver. 9. Then shalt thou understand, &c.] "When you shall seriously have inclined yourself to the study of wisdom, and God shall have given it you; then shall you know in what true judgment, or righteousness, consists. You shall know your duty towards God, towards your neighbour, and towards yourselves. Wisdom shall enlighten you to penetrate into its whole extent; it shall aid you to practice all its duty." Calmet.

Ver. 12. The man that speaketh froward things] "With a design to corrupt your mind, and entice you to evil principles and practices:" A species of corruption of which young persons in particular should be extremely cautious.

Ver.

walk in the ways of darkness;

14 Who rejoice to do evil, *and* delight in the frowardness of the wicked;

15 Whose ways *are* crooked, and *they* froward in their paths:

16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, *even* from the stranger *which* flattereth with her words;

17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.

19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

20 ¶ That thou mayest walk in the way

of good *men*, and keep the paths of the righteous.

21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

CHAP. III.

An exhortation to obedience, to faith, to mortification, to devotion, to patience. The happy gain of wisdom. The power and the benefits of wisdom. An exhortation to charitableness, peaceableness, and contentedness. The cursed state of the wicked.

MY son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments.

Ver. 15. Whose ways, &c.] Or, who are perverse in their ways, and froward in their paths.

Ver. 16. To deliver thee from the strange woman] The strange woman means one who is not yours, whether she be married or not. Solomon expresses by this name a common woman, or a married woman who abandons herself to debauchery. See chap. v. 3, &c. Some have thought that, under the figure of an adulterous woman, the wise man persuades us to shun all those doctrines which draw away the mind from God: such as those of the Epicureans and idolaters. But this seems to be intimated before in the 12th verse; and therefore we may understand the present passage literally as a caution against the breach of the next commandment to that mentioned in the first chap. ver. 10, 11. where he charges his son by no means to consent with murderers; and here, to shun fornication and adultery, which entirely alienate the mind from wisdom. One of the first things, therefore, to which she directs us, and the principal benefit that we receive from her, is, to preserve our understandings from being corrupt, by keeping our bodies pure and undefiled: See Bishop Patrick and Calmet.

Ver. 17. Which forsaketh the guide, &c.] This circumstance aggravates her infidelity and shame. The first inclinations are always the most sincere and constant. See Prov. v. 18. Isai. liv. 6. Joel, i. 8.

*Ver. 18. Her house inclineth unto death] Adultery was forbidden under pain of death, both of the man and woman. See Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22. Or otherwise the meaning may be, "Her house is a place of death to him that enters it; he will there find the death of his soul, and the loss of his innocence. It may be considered in some sort as a kind of grave, where he goes to bury himself alive. Her ways lead to hell: Unhappy he who knows her, and attaches himself to her." It is added, *And her paths unto the dead: רפאים Rephaim, the giants; those first and great opposers of God, who for their execrable misdeeds were condemned to the place of darkness. See Job, xxvi. 5. Thus we are taught that the next point of wisdom is to be learned from the dear-bought experience of others; who have been ruined, body and soul, by those lewd courses to**

which they were enticed; and here the wise man leads us back as far as the old world, which was wholly destroyed by such villainies as men's brutal lusts and passions lead them to commit. I cannot recommend to my young readers a better comment on this subject than Mr. Osterwald's excellent *Treatise on Uncleaness*.

Ver. 20. That thou mayest walk] Or, Walk thou therefore.

REFLECTIONS.—Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore by all means to be sought after.

1. The way prescribed is threefold. (1.) Serious attention to, and meditation upon, the word of God. (2.) Fervent and importunate prayer, the best guide to the knowledge of the oracles of God. (3.) The diligent use of every appointed means, being as eager in the search as those whose hearts are set upon riches are in discovering the golden mines and ransacking the precious ore.

2. Success will crown these labours when persevered in. *Then shalt thou understand that capital point, the fear of the Lord;* wherein it consists, and how it is to be evidenced in the conversation: *and find the knowledge of God, of his grace and glory, particularly as manifested in the face of Jesus Christ, whom to know is everlasting life: and this is the gift of God, not acquired by the mere exercise of our rational faculties, but communicated by the Spirit of truth, out of whose mouth cometh knowledge and understanding; in the scriptures, which he hath caused to be written for our learning, in which are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: not the shew of it, but the reality, found wisdom, and laid up there for the righteous, those who by faith in Christ are so accounted of God, and whose hearts and ways are by the Spirit renewed in righteousness and true holiness. He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly, who make God's word their rule; and, being under the divine protection, the shield of almighty love is stretched over them, that sin, Satan, and the world, may not come near to hurt them. He keepeth the paths of judgment; doth what is right himself in the dispensations of his providence and grace; and preserveth the way of his saints: Then shalt thou understand righteousness and judgment; distinguish truth*

2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

5 ¶ Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7 ¶ Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be health to thy navel; and marrow to thy bones.

9 ¶ Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase:.

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

from error; know how to act with justice in all thy dealings, and what is the duty of every station and relation, and equity, *yea, every good path*, whether respecting God or man: and thus *the man of God shall be perfect, thoroughly furnished for every good work*.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *My son, forget not my law*] In this chapter Solomon continues to press obedience to the precepts of wisdom, from a consideration of its benefits, which he speaks of more largely than in the foregoing chapter. See ver. 9—12. After which he returns to the general exhortation, ver. 13. advising every one to learn the doctrine delivered by God, and to be obedient; not to be so foolish as to prefer their own wisdom or craft before it. Solomon has composed this book with great address. Direct precepts, and moral instructions, proposed in a dogmatic manner, might weary; he diversifies his subjects and his persons, to relieve the attention of his disciple. Sometimes it is God, sometimes it is wisdom, sometimes it is Solomon himself, who speaks. He varies by a hundred different and agreeable ways a matter in itself extremely serious and important, and consequently demanding application and attention of mind. Here God himself appears to speak: *My son, forget not my law*. It is a great part of wisdom to continue faithfully and strongly attached to the law of God. Hence must be drawn all the instructions of wisdom. The *law*, in this place, may also signify the lessons and the precepts which the wise man gives to his disciple, whom he affectionately calls his *son*. (See ver. 21.) But the two following verses alluding immediately to the Mosaic law, it seems more probable that that law is meant. See Exod. xx. 12. Deut. v. 16. vi. 8. and Calmet.

Ver. 3. *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee*] *Virtue and fidelity*, Schultens; who observes, that these words are often joined together concerning God; see Ps. xxv. 10. lxxxix. 14. concerning man; Gen. xxiv. 49. xlvii. 29. Josh. ii. 14. With men, nothing can be more advantageous than virtue and fidelity, which include the sincere and constant performance of all kinds of duty. By an inversion of the syntax it is said, *Let them not forsake thee*, instead of *Forsake not thou virtue and fidelity*. See Gen. xxiv. 27. and there is much beauty and strength in this mode of expression. God commands us here to exercise *mercy and truth*, compassion and fidelity, towards each other; and he promises us in return, that we shall find favour and *good success* with men, ver. 4. where, instead of *good understanding*, we may read, *good encouragement*. See 2 Cor. viii. 21.

Ver. 5. *And lean not, &c.*] Or, *Rest not upon, &c.* God demands that we love him, that we believe in him, that we trust in him; that we seek for him with all our heart: he would have nothing of us by halves: and surely he deserves that we should put our whole confidence in him; full of goodness as he is to protect, great in power as he is to defend. What can our wisdom, our industry, do without him?—Yet he does not forbid us to use our own prudence or understanding, but not to lean or rest upon it; as if every thing should depend upon that, exclusive of him. See Calmet.

Ver. 7. *Be not wise in thine own eyes, &c.*] He employs all his authority, and all his eloquence, to exhort us to search after wisdom; but he would not by any means that we should be wise in our own eyes: he would have us doubt our own understanding; be always disposed to receive the good instructions of others; and refer to God, and not to ourselves, what we do: in one word, that our wisdom should never cause in us any pride, presumption, or temerity. See 2 Cor. xii. 11. and Gal. v. 24.

Ver. 8. *Health to thy navel*] Many expositors, after the LXX, render this, *It shall be health to thy flesh, or to thy body*, instead of *thy navel*: but the learned Schultens has shewn that the word is properly rendered here, and according to the genius of eastern language, which by the *navel* expresses the *middle or centre*; a figure usual with the Greeks also, who called Delphos *the navel of the earth*, because they thought that that oracle was placed in the centre of the earth. It appears, that the *navel* here expresses the middle of the body, and of the heart. The healing of the *navel* is spoken of, because fomentations applied to this part diffuse their power throughout the whole body. So the reverence of God, and the hatred of evil, bring health to the body, and health to the mind; and render strong and serene the inmost faculties of both. See Schultens on the place. Bishop Patrick observes, that this verse seems to be but a metaphorical representation of that firmness, that vigorous health and cheerfulness of mind, which virtue (or holiness) implies.

Ver. 9. *Honour the Lord with thy substance*] According to the manners of the east, a subject was to pay his homage and shew his attachment to his lord and sovereign by presents. To make presents to a king, is to acknowledge him, to pay him homage. God would not have his people present themselves before him with empty hands. Exod. xxiii. 15. The LXX render this verse, *Honour the Lord from all thy righteous labours, and pay him the first-fruits of thy righteousness*. They make use of the words *righteous*,

11 ¶ My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth.

13 ¶ Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom, and the man *that* getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She *is* more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days *is* in her right hand; *and* in her left hand riches and honour.

17 Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *are* peace.

18 She *is* a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy *is every one* that

retaineth her.

19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

21 ¶ My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.

23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.

26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

righteous, and *righteousness*, to shew the detestation which God has of offerings which are made to him from possessions wickedly acquired. "Whatever is offered to God from the hands of wickedness (says one of the ancients) irritates the wrath of the Almighty." The promises in the next verse, and so, throughout this book, all those of a temporal kind, refer to the carnal Israelites: the spiritual Israelites desire to lay up treasures in heaven. See Calmet.

Ver. 12. *For whom the Lord loveth, &c.*] The LXX read, *For whom the Lord loveth he reproveth, and chasteneth every son whom he receiveth.* From whence it is evident, that they read the Hebrew differently; and their construction is more natural, and agrees with Heb. xii. 6. Houbigant follows the LXX.

Ver. 16—18. *Length of days is in her right hand*] The wise man represents wisdom (i. e. *holiness* or *religion*) as other authors have done, particularly the excellent Cebes, in the shape of a beautiful woman, or rather queen; with her arms extended, in the posture not only of directing, but also of rewarding, her lovers and followers; for she holds forth in her right hand the great blessing of *health* and *length of days*, unto all those who will walk in the way to which she points; and it was but just to place this in her right hand; i. e. to give it the precedence, because it was the chief temporal promise of the law, and indeed the most desirable of all earthly blessings. After this follow *wealth* and *reputation*; which he places in her left hand, as inferior blessings, but which proceed also from her gift. Spiritually, these blessings refer to eternity, and the glories of heaven. As for *cheerfulness* in all conditions, there are no pleasures, he affirms, like those which wait upon wisdom and attend her motions; safe and secure pleasures; which do not merely gratify us for the present, and then expose us to danger, and leave us to the corro-

sives of sad reflections; but which give us a peaceable possession of perpetual joy, which never dies or decays, but, like the tree of life, remains fresh for ever. This allusion to the tree of life seems to be proverbial for that which prolongs life, and makes it pleasant and delightful. Some of the fathers understand it of Christ and his doctrine; and it is literally true, that he gives immortality, as the tree of life in paradise would have done. See Bishop Patrick.

Ver. 19, 20. *The Lord by wisdom, &c.*] See Job, xxxviii. 4, &c. The effects which we call natural are the productions of the Creator's sovereign wisdom. Some understand by the *depths broken up*, the waters of the deluge; others, the original creation and distribution of the waters. The *dews* in Palestine are much more abundant than in our countries, whence the wise man gives them the same origin with the rain, namely the *clouds*; though the dew does not descend from so great a height.

Ver. 21—26. *My son, let not them depart, &c.*] Wisdom gives life, health, safety, to body and soul: it is the most precious ornament of those who possess it: for the rest, when the wise man in so many places promises life, health, prosperity, peace, glory, to those who seek for wisdom, we must not take these promises absolutely and in the letter. We have known wise men live but a short time; we have seen them in affliction, in sickness, in adversity: Solomon himself informs us in the 17th verse, that God tries, by temporal evils and afflictions, his children and most faithful servants. We must therefore say, that God will either deliver his people from all these evils, or preserve them from them, or give them patience in this world, and put them into such a state as they would not change for all the riches and advantages of fortune: or, that, after this life, he will crown their holiness, virtue, and fidelity, with the highest rewards. The 25th verse should be rendered, *Thou shalt not be afraid of any unexpected fear, nor of the bursting in of the*

27 ¶ Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

29 ¶ Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

30 Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

32 For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.

33 ¶ The curse of the LORD is in the

house of the wicked: but he blesteth the habitation of the just.

34 Surely he scorneth the scorner: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

C H A P. IV.

Solomon, to persuade obedience, sheweth what instruction he had of his parents, to study wisdom, and to shun the path of the wicked: he exhorteth to faith, and sanctification.

HEAR, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

the wicked, when it shall come upon thee; or the assaults of wicked men rushing upon thee. The 26th verse is rendered by the LXX, The Lord shall be over all thy ways, and shall strengthen thy foot, that thou shalt not be shaken. See Calmet and Schultens.

Ver. 27. Withhold not good, &c.] The words may literally be rendered, Withhold not good from the lords or masters of it; which some refer to the restitution of goods gained unjustly: but the connection requires that we understand the poor; who, by an elegant figure, are called the lords and masters of those goods which are possessed by the rich, so far as a just portion is due to them. Schultens. Calmet observes, that whoever has the power to do good is under the strongest obligation to assist those who have need of his assistance. The necessity of the poor has a just claim upon the abundance of the rich.

Ver. 30. If he have done thee no harm] "Contend not without reason; be not punctilious, litigious, quarrelsome;" we are not here forbidden to defend ourselves; but to be cautious, lest we offend against charity, justice, wisdom. Seneca says, "To contend with one's equal is uncertainty; with one's superior, madness; with one's inferior, meanness." Schultens observes, that two senses offer themselves to him upon this verse: the one, Contend not with a man without reason; because he hath not cherished any evil against you: i. e. because he is mild, placid, benign; and from the goodness of his disposition would not repel injury with injury: a grievous crime, yet how common! The other sense presses more closely upon retaliation, and a desire of revenge, thus: Because he is weaker, and of less power than to have courage to cherish any hatred; or to attempt any evil against thee: a detestable wickedness, which yet has always reigned in the world. See his note.

Ver. 32. For the froward is abomination] "He that perversely departs from all the rules of truth and justice is above all expression abominable to the Lord, even in his highest prosperity: but the Lord is a friend to men of sincere integrity; who know the secret of his providence in raising those wicked oppressors so high, that they may have the more dreadful fall."

Ver. 34. Surely he scorneth the scorner] God will treat the scorner as they deserve. See ch. i. 26. The Psalmist says, to the same meaning, Ps. xviii. 26. With the holy thou wilt shew thyself holy: with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward. "Thou wilt present thyself to those who seek thee; thou wilt turn thy back to those who despise thee." The LXX render the verse, The Lord resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the lowly; and St. Peter and St. James have quoted it according to them. See 1 Pet. v. 5. Jam. iv. 6.

Ver. 35. Shame shall be the promotion of fools] The elevation of fools shall turn to their confusion. The more they have been elevated, the more their folly shall be known, and their fall become more fatal. Schultens renders it peculiarly, and he thinks emphatically, And the branding of infamy ennobles the foolish. See his note.

* * I have omitted to add any REFLECTIONS to this and several other Chapters; as the proverbs contained in them are almost all independent of each other; and, therefore, Reflections upon each article would too much encroach on more interesting subjects.

C H A P. IV.

Ver. 1. Hear, ye children] Solomon here proposes himself as an example of docility; but in such a manner, that he refers all the advantages of his education to the early impressions which he received from his father and his mother under the blessing of Divine wisdom. He makes this appear by all his attachment; tender and respectful as it was, and by his sincere regard to his parents, particularly to his mother, to whose eulogy he has consecrated almost the whole 31st chapter. The principal instructions in the present chapter are these; that parents ought to take the utmost care to instruct their children diligently, and the higher their station the more accurate should their education be. Above all things, the excellence of wisdom, holiness, and virtue, is to be inculcated. See on ver. 7. Next to this they are to be cautioned against evil company, as the bane of youth; the wretchedness of their life who live wickedly, and the happiness, comfort, and satisfaction, of theirs

3 For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments and live.

5 ¶ Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

9 She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.

12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her

not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

14 ¶ Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

20 ¶ My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

23 ¶ Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

theirs who live piously and virtuously, are to be represented, ver. 14—19. Next they are to be taught how necessary it is to be constant in reading good books, especially the scriptures, ver. 21. and to have an upright heart, sincerely disposed to follow such directions. Watchfulness also over the senses is commanded, as necessary to preserve the affections from being corrupted.

Ver. 3. *For I was my father's son, &c.*] Literally, *I was a tender and delicate child, and the only son of my mother.* The word, *only son*, in this place may be taken in the sense in which the LXX have translated it, and which we have followed. Greek and Latin authors often express by this epithet an only son or a first-born. Houbigant renders the verse, *For I was the principal son of my father, the only-beloved of my mother.*

Ver. 7. *Wisdom is the principal thing*] “As there is no thing comparable to wisdom; so the first step to it is, to know as much, and to prize it accordingly. Begin therefore to be wise, by looking upon the fear of God as above all earthly possessions; and by being willing, if it were necessary, to give all thou art worth to know what is pleasing to him.” The reader will find a good comment on this verse in the Book of Wisdom, chap. vi. 12—17.

Ver. 18. *But the path of the just is as the shining light*] The presence of the just enlightens, instructs, edifies, rejoices: they carry light into every place by their example, and by

their instructions. And they grow more and more in knowledge, grace, and consolation, until all be perfected and swallowed up in glory. The wicked, on the contrary, are always in darkness, ver. 19. The former are the children of light of whom the gospel speaks; the other are the children of darkness, who know not against what they are about to stumble. They commit sin without scruple; they deliver themselves up to it without remorse; they fall without grief, and they continue in it without repentance.

Ver. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence*] Above all keeping keep thy heart. Schultens. The life and death of the soul proceed from the heart: an upright, clear, enlightened, watchful heart gives life; a heart corrupted, dissipated, without knowledge, without wisdom, brings death: from the heart proceeds all evil. See Matt. xv. 18, 19. Guard it therefore most carefully; with all kind of diligence, and above all other cares: guard it from evil thoughts and evil desires: for if you have evil desires, it is impossible for you to refrain from evil actions. Your heart, corrupted as it is, will cause your destruction, if you do not employ all your care, in dependence on the blessing of God, to guard it well; to observe its motions, to regulate its inclinations, to repress its fallies.

Ver. 25. *Let thine eyes look right on*] This advice principally regards the conduct of manners. “Apply yourself to yourself, to your own proper conduct, to the

26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

C H A P. V.

Solomon exhorteth to the study of wisdom; he sheweth the mischief of fornication and riot: he exhorteth to contentedness, liberality, and chastity. The wicked are overtaken with their own sins.

MY son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:

“direction of your own ways: carry not your eyes, your attention, to things which are foreign to you, to the persons and the affairs of others: *For the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.*” See chap. xvii. 24. *Ver. 27. Turn not, &c.]* The LXX and Arabic read, “Do not decline to the right, nor to the left; remove thy foot from the evil way. For God knoweth the ways to the right, but those to the left are perverse ways: for he shall make thy paths straight, and shall conduct thy steps in peace.” The meaning of the verse seems to be, “Fly all extremes, and neither attempt to add to, nor diminish from, God’s commandments.”

REFLECTIONS.—Nothing too great can be said in the commendation of divine wisdom.

1. Solomon earnestly exhorts his children, and all like them of a teachable spirit, to attend to the lessons of instruction that he was about to deliver. *Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding;* fathers are bound to use every method to inculcate on their children the knowledge of divine things, and they are in duty bound to pay all deference and attention to their advice; but whether they hear, or forbear, it will be a parent’s comfort to have done his best: *for I give you good doctrine;* which, if received, will make you both wise and holy; *for sake ye not my law.*

2. He communicated to them what he had received from his father, and by experience had proved to be excellent. *For I was my father’s son, tender and only-beloved in the sight of my mother;* the darling son, Jediah, beloved of the Lord, and therefore beloved of them. *He taught me also;* though a king, not too great to be a teacher; *and said unto me, let thine heart retain my words, treasure them up in thy memory, as the most invaluable riches; keep my commandments, and live:* his obedience to them would, according to the promise, prolong his days on earth; or his fidelity to the inspired instructions of his father would lead him to life eternal. For his psalms are full of Christ, whom to know is everlasting life. *Get wisdom, Christ the sum and substance of it, and the knowledge of his grace, revealed in the word of truth; get understanding, in the diligent use of all instituted means; for, though it is the gift of God, this does not make our diligence the less needful, but rather engages us to exert it, in confidence of success from God: forget it not, whatever measure is*

2 That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.

3 ¶ For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honey-comb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:

4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

6 Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.

attained, neither decline from the words of my mouth; for when once we deviate but a step from the paths of righteousness, we know not where we shall stop. *Principiis obsta;* restrain the first wanderings, is the grand maxim and only security. *For sake her not, and she shall preserve thee* from the snares and temptations which surround us; *love her,* as the most desirable object, *and she shall keep thee* from sin, from sorrow, from every evil way. *Wisdom is the principal thing;* either Christ, who is the head of all principalities and powers, and the prince of the kings of the earth; or his word, the knowledge of which is the highest wisdom; *and wish all thy getting, get understanding;* for this, of all gain, will most amply recompense our toils: an interest in Christ, and acquaintance with his truth, are the grand acquisitions. *Exalt her,* ascribe to Jesus the honour due unto his excellent name, and highly value and esteem the glorious truths of God; *and she shall promote thee, she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her,* the highest honour and promotion, even that of being sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, to which all, who by faith apprehend Christ, shall be advanced. *She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee;* not like earth’s fading ornaments, or corruptible crowns, but ornaments which age will never tarnish, and crowns of glory incorruptible, eternal in the heavens.

3. Solomon himself seconds the instructions that his father had given him, with his own. *Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of thy life shall be many;* often here, at least hereafter, life eternal will be the reward. *I have taught thee in the way of wisdom, I have led thee in right paths;* and, therefore, if he turned aside from them, he would be inexcusable: sins against light and conscience are doubly sinful. *When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened,* but in the glorious liberty of the sons of God thine heart shall be enlarged with love, and every obstruction removed; *and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble,* through any snares laid by the enemy of souls. *Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go,* hang upon her as thy guide and support, and let nothing separate thee from Christ and his ways; *keep her,* by faith maintain a sure interest in him, *for she is thy life,* the author of the life of grace now, and the bestower of the eternal life of glory, which all who are faithful to him will shortly enjoy with him.

For the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more

- 7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children,
and depart not from the words of my mouth.
8 Remove thy way far from her, and come
not nigh the door of her house:
9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others,
and thy years unto the cruel:
10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth;
and thy labours *be* in the house of a stranger;
11 And thou mourn at the last, when thy

- flesh and thy body are consumed,
12 And say, How have I hated instruction,
and my heart despised reproof;
13 And have not obeyed the voice of my
teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that
instructed me!
14 I was almost in all evil, in the midst of
the congregation and assembly.
15 ¶ Drink waters out of thine own

more and more unto the perfect day; their character is the just or justified, and also holy, who, by faith in Christ Jesus, are righteous before God. Their path is Christ himself, they walk in him, supported by his grace, and led by his word and Spirit, their shining light; and as the beams of day first break through the darkness, then in the horizon deep the rising sun appears, till at the last, ascending his meridian height, his brightest glories are displayed; so, increasing with the increase of God, the faithful soul grows more and more enlightened with divine truth, enlivened with divine warmth, till perfected in holiness, the full blaze of glory comes; and in eternity, without a cloud, we shall enjoy the transforming and beatific vision of our God. Blessed, therefore, and happy are they who walk in this way.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. My son attend, &c.] There being nothing to which youth is so prone as to give up themselves to their fleshly desires, and nothing so pernicious to them as to converse with harlots, the wise man renews his cautions against impure lusts, as destructive of true wisdom; and with repeated entreaties begs attention to so weighty an argument, which here he prosecutes more largely, and presses not only with singular elegance, but powerful reasoning. The principal things to be learned in this chapter are, not to believe every thing to be good for us which pleases the flesh for the present; but in the beginning of any pleasure to look to the end of it; to avoid the company of harlots; to use due care in the choice of a wife; to love her very tenderly; and to restrain ourselves from inordinate affections by the consideration of God's omnipresence. See Bishop Patrick.

Ver. 2, 3. That thy lips may keep knowledge] The LXX read, The understanding of my lips commands thee; have nothing to do with a strange woman; for honey distilleth from the lips of a woman who is a fornicator, which may for a time fatten thy cheeks. See Wall and Houbigant.

Ver. 6. Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life] Houbigant renders this, She is far from following the way of life: her steps wander whither she herself knoweth not: which is very like the Chaldee. The design of the wise man seems to be, to point out the inconstancy, irregularity, and wickedness, of the strange woman's life. Her ways are inconstant; she is not attached to her husband, or to any one man, but abandons herself to the first comer; has neither knowledge, wisdom, nor discernment; she has no other rule than her passion, no other end than her pleasure. She is profligate, and wholly lost, says Schultens; affected

neither by the fear of God, nor the care of her own salvation. See ch. ii. 18, 19.

Ver. 9. Lest thou give thine honour unto others] The word others אֲחֵרִים acbeirim, denoted, among the Israelites, Strangers; aliens from the true religion, and also its enemies. I suppose it has respect to selling into slavery, by which a person puts himself under the yoke of strangers. It was a great crime to sell one's self; a greater to do so to strangers and aliens from the worship of the true God. He who cleaves to an adulteress sells himself from the family of God, and delivers himself into a foreign house and servitude. Thine honour, or glory, signifies, "The glory of thy name; the glory of a nation consecrated to God; the glory of liberty; and the prerogative of a glorious immortality, to which thou art called." Thy years are the season of life, delivered or given up to the cruel, by him who, when he ought to be free, and the master of himself, and of his own time, can no longer enjoy light and liberty, after he has submitted himself to the heavy yoke of lust; but, as it were cast into prison, is compelled every day to submit to a cruel and hard tyrant. See Horat. Ep. 1, 2. and Schultens. Some of the versions, which Houbigant follows, render the first clause, Lest thou give thy strength or vigour to others.

Ver. 11. And thou mourn at the last] When in the decline of life thou shalt be without strength, without vigour, without children, without support, without resource. We must recollect the great desire which the Hebrews had for children and a numerous family, in order fully to conceive the remorse of the man who finds himself, through his own fault, incapacitated from having legitimate children; of a man used to debauchery, and surrounded with the evils which are the natural consequences of intemperance. The wise man here plainly points at that shameful disease, which he does not choose to name, but which has been in all ages the just punishment of the debauched. The writer of Ecclesiasticus has alluded to it, Ch. xix. 2, 3. Calmet.

Ver. 14. I was almost in all evil] I am plunged into almost all evils in the midst of the assembly of my people. Calmet, Houbigant renders it, I am well nigh become the most miserable of all those amongst whom I live. "What a wretched man am I! There is scarcely any misery in respect of estate, or body, or soul, into which I am not already plunged." The words also are, and may be well rendered thus, In a moment I am come into almost all evil. "In how little a time, and for what short and momentary pleasures, am I now reduced to extreme and remediless evils!"

Ver. 15. Drink waters out of thine own cistern] The allego-

cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.

17 Let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee.

18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

22 ¶ His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

23 He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

CHAP. VI.

Against suretyship, idleness, and mischievousness. Seven things hateful to God. The blessings of obedience. The mischiefs of fornication and adultery.

MY son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,

2 Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.

3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself,

gory here begun is carried on through several verses. It has been differently understood; but the interpretation which seems most generally followed, is that of those who conceive that the wise man here subjoins a commendation of matrimony and the chaste preservation of the marriage-bed for the propagation of a legitimate offspring, to his dehortation from illegitimate practices and stolen waters; and Schultens observes, that no figure is more elegant, or more common among the easterns, than this. See Numb. xxiv. 7. Isai. xlvi. 1. li. 1. Jer. ii. 23. According to this sense of the allegory, the next verse must refer to children, and the meaning of the two verses is this, "Live with your wife faithfully and chaste, that you may see with pleasure a lovely and numerous family proceed from your house." Some follow here the version of the LXX. *Let not thy waters overflow, or be dispersed from thy fountain; and let thy waters run, or flow in thine own streets.* They observe, that from ver. 3 to 15. Solomon dissuades his son from following strange women; and from ver. 15 to 20. advises him in figurative terms to confine himself to his own wife. The Vatican, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Aquila, all read in the negative. See Houbigant's notes.

Ver. 17. Let them be only thine own] *Possess them alone:* "Love only your wife, and give not to her any occasion, by your irregularity, to charge you with infidelity; guard her in such a manner, that she may not be exposed to the seduction of evil men."

Ver. 18. Let thy fountain be blessed] *That your wife may be fruitful, and God may bless you with a numerous posterity.* The next clause very clearly points out the meaning of the metaphor.

Ver. 19. Let her be as the loving hind] Bishop Patrick observes, that the wise man describes allegorically the felicities of the nuptial state under the comparison of a domestic fountain, where a man may quench his natural thirst, and from whence streams, that is, children, may be derived to serve the public good; and, secondly, under the comparison of a young hind, and a roe, which naturalists

have observed to be very fond creatures, and which were usually kept by the greatest persons in their palaces, who diverted themselves with them, and adorned them with chains and garlands. See Scheuchzer on the place. Bouchart hath shewn, that the *רַחֵץ* *iangalath*, which we translate *roe*, is a creature which lived in mountainous places, and could climb the steepest rocks. Instead of *her breasts*, Houbigant reads, *her loves; let her loves, or love, always inebriate, or satisfy thee.* See ch. vii. 18. and Virgil, *Æneid*, vii. ver. 483.

Ver. 21. For the ways of a man are before the Lord] See Pl. cxxxix. Instead of *pondereth*, in the next clause, we may read *measures*.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. My son, if thou be surety] This and the ten following verses contain precepts oeconomic. The wise man recommends first, not to become surety for another; and, secondly, to avoid idleness: he inculcates the first advice in various places of this book; and certainly nothing is more contrary to true oconomy, than to expose one's own affairs to ruin from the negligence and ill-conduct of a stranger: Solomon does not forbid us to give or to lend; he exhorts, on the contrary, to do it readily, and with a good heart; but not to engage ourselves in the entangled affairs of others. The first philosophers of Greece held the same maxims; and the ancient Persians had an especial abhorrence of two things, debts and lies. Striking hands was an ancient custom among the easterns, whereby they confirmed their promises and engagements. See chap. xvii. 18. The LXX render this verse, *My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, thou wilt give thine hand to an enemy:* as much as to say, "Instead of a friend you will have an enemy;" or, "You will be delivered up to your enemy; i. e. to the creditor of your friend." It may be proper just to observe, that this precept is not to be taken in its utmost rigour; since there certainly may be many cases in which suretyship may be as useful as laudable.

Ver.

when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.

4 Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

6 ¶ Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

12 ¶ A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.

13 He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers.

14 Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth

mischief continually; he soweth discord.

15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

16 ¶ These six things doth the LORD hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief.

19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren.

20 ¶ My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.

21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

22 When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.

Ver. 3. When thou art come, &c.] The LXX render this, *For thou art come into the hands of evil men upon thy friend's account; go therefore, be not careless, or remiss, but earnest and importunate with thy friend, to get thyself discharged.* This, says Dr. Grey, is more agreeable to the sense, and the metre, and is confirmed by the Syriac.

Ver. 6. Go to the ant] Horace has made use of the same similitude:

— Thus the little ant (to human lore
No mean example) forms her frugal store,
Gather'd with mighty toils on every side,
Nor ignorant, nor careless to provide
For future want.

Sat. I. lib. i.

The reader will also find in Virgil's *Æn.* iv. ver. 404. a fine simile taken from this industrious little creature. Concerning its natural history, Scheuchzer treats at large on the place. See also *Speſtacle de la Nature*, tom. i. and Dr. Delaney's 17th Sermon on the Social Duties.

Ver. 11. As one that travelleth] Dr. Grey would render this verse, *So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want [shall overtake thee speedily] as a post, or messenger.* See Jer. li. 31. Lord Bacon upon this proverb distinguishes between the poverty which comes as a traveller, and the want which comes as an armed man. The shipwreck of fortune falls upon prodigals, or such as are careless of their estates, by insensible degrees at the first; with soft silent paces, like a traveller, and is hardly perceived; but soon after necessity invades him like an armed man;

i. e. presses upon him so hard, that he feels it plainly, and perceives that there is no resistance to be made: whereupon he gives this prudent advice,—to prevent the traveller, and to be well provided against the armed man. See his *Advancement of Learning*, book viii. chap. 2. parab. 5.

Ver. 12. A naughty person] In the Hebrew a man of *Belial*, with a froward mouth, Houbigant renders, *distorting his mouth.* The LXX read, *Walketh in ways that are not right.* A froward, or distorted mouth, signifies a speech void of truth, fidelity, and honesty.

Ver. 13. He winketh] It is a remark of St. Ambrose, that the mein and gesture of the body are an image of the mind; and he was so delicate upon this subject; that he would not ordain the son of one of his particular friends, because the young man's air and manner were by no means conformable to clerical gravity. The motion of the body is as it were the voice of the soul. Ovid says,

Verba superciliis, sine vocè silentia dicant;
Verba leges digitis, verba notata mero.

See his *Amor.* i. and Calmet.

Ver. 14. Frowardness is in his heart, &c.] *Pravo corde architectatur malum*, as one translation has it: he does not do mischief by chance or negligently, but deliberates how he may do it with most success; he builds it commodiously and speciously to the eye, that it may invite men to inhabit it: there is no industry nor art wanting to make it prosper, and yield a good harvest.

X x 2

Ver.

25 ¶ Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.

26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulterers will hunt for the precious life.

27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

28 Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?

29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.

30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;

31 But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.

32 But whoso committeth adultery with a

woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

33 A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

34 For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

35 He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

C H A P. VII.

Solomon persuadeth to a sincere and kind familiarity with wisdom. In an example of his own experience, he sheweth the cunning of a whore, and the desperate simplicity of a young woman: he dissuadeth from such wickedness.

MY son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.

2 Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

Ver. 25. With her eyelids] Women in the east used to be particular in painting and beautifying their eyelids; and as their motive was by that means to ensnare and captivate the men, the expression seems to be highly proper. "The eye of a harlot is the snare of her lover," says St. Ambrose. See Philostratus's Epist. γυναικί. Though the words, a man is brought, in the next verse are not in the Hebrew, yet they seem plainly to be understood, and give us a better sense than any of the other versions; which have it, *The price of a whore is scarcely that of a single loaf.*

Ver. 27—29. Can a man take fire] "The wife of one's neighbour is as fire: if you deliver yourself up to her impure love, it will consume you: you give admission to a passion which is unconquerable, and in the end will fall under the hand of her enraged husband." See ver. 34.

Ver. 31. If he be found, he shall restore sevenfold] The law, Exod. xxii. 1—4. did not oblige the thief to restore sevenfold, but only five oxen for one, or, in another case, only double: wherefore some commentators think that the word *sevenfold*, is only used as an indefinite number. "He shall restore the value of that which he has taken, and much more:" others would render it, *If he be found out seven times, he shall restore as often, till he give all the substance of his house.* But some have thought that the wise man speaks not of that restitution which the law requires, but of that which either the wronged person, being powerful, might force the thief to make, or which the thief would willingly give, rather than be exposed to public shame; as appears by the following clause, wherein he adds to this sevenfold restitution *all his substance*, which no law of God or man required.

Ver. 34, 35. For jealousy is the rage of a man] The wise man carries on the contrast between the punishment of theft and adultery. "The theft (says he) may be ran-

somed by making restitution; but he that violates the marriage-bed raises such an inexorable spirit of revenge in the bosom of the injured, as nothing but the utmost rigour of the law, the death of the offender, will satisfy." Schultens observes, that no version can express the force of the Hebrew; *The inflammation of jealousy is the setting a man on fire*: as much as to say, that the jealousy with which a man is inflamed, renders him wholly on fire, and so heated with that fire as never to be appeased, but borne with inexorable violence to the revenge of his defiled bed. Houbigant renders it, *For the fury of the husband shall grow hot.* The principal points of instruction to be learned from this chapter are these: care of our family, caution in engaging for others; diligence in some honest employment, hatred of idleness, as contrary to nature; not to contemn the meanest instructor, but to learn something even of the smallest creature: to give good heed to the admonition of our parents and instructors, when they teach the will of God; and above all things to fortify ourselves against sins of uncleanness.

C H A P. VII.

Ver. 1. My son, keep my words] Chastity is a virtue of so much consequence, and impurity such a bane to youth, that the wise man thought he could not too often make mention of the danger of the one, to move men carefully to preserve the other; therefore he repeats with renewed importunities what he had before urged; and, the better to secure those who desire to be free from the snare of lewdness, he represents, together with the simpleness of young men, the cunning and crafty desires of an impudent adulteress; which is most admirably and elegantly set forth from ver. 6 to 21. as the fatal consequences of such an attachment are in the subsequent verses: and, indeed, this picture which the wise man gives us, deserves to be studied with great attention; as, properly noted, it cannot fail to have

3 Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.

4 Say unto wisdom thou *art* my sifter; and call understanding *thy* kinswoman:

5 That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger *which* flattereth with her words.

6 ¶ For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,

7 And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding,

8 Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house,

9 In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:

10 And, behold, there met him a woman *with* the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

11 (She *is* loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:

12 Now *is* she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)

13 So she caught him and kissed him, *and* with an impudent face said unto him,

14 *I have* peace-offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.

15 Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

16 I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved *works*, with fine linen of Egypt.

17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves.

19 For the good man *is* not at home, he is gone a long journey:

20 He hath taken a bag of money with him, *and* will come home at the day appointed.

21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

22 He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;

23 Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it *is* for his life.

24 ¶ Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.

have its due effect, and to give a just abhorrence of those infamous Syrens who only allure to betray and ruin. See Patrick.

Ver. 4. *Call understanding thy kinswoman*] *Thy relation*: The LXX have it, *Make wisdom thy acquaintance*. "Say to wisdom, Thou art my sister, my spouse, my beloved, my inclination. Give to her thy heart, that she may preserve thee from the snares of the strange woman." The name of *sister*, is a name of friendship, used in scripture, between the husband and wife, and denotes the chaste love which he should have to wisdom. See the Canticles and Calmet.

Ver. 6. *I looked through my casement*] *Through the lattice*. In Palestine they had no glass to their windows; they closed them with lattices or curtains.

Ver. 9. *In the twilight, &c.*] Or, *In the twilight, in the close of the day; when night and darkness were yet in embryo, or just beginning*.

Ver. 14. *I have peace-offerings with me*] This woman was the more abominable, as she covered her lewdness with the mask of piety and devotion. There were three sorts of *peace-offerings*. See Lev. vii. 11, 12. 16. Bishop Patrick takes these mentioned here to have been the last of them; offerings of thanksgiving for blessings already obtained; not of prayer for blessings not yet received: and his reason is, because she was so solicitous to have company at her feast upon this very day. Every body knows that such

sacrifices were to be of the best; either of bullocks, sheep, or goats (Lev. iii. 1. 6. 12.); and that the greatest part of them fell to the share of the person who offered them, that he might feast with God.

Ver. 17. *I have perfumed, &c.*] *I have sprinkled or bedewed my bed with myrrh, cedar-oil, and juice of cinnamon*.

Ver. 20. *At the day appointed*] *At the day of full-moon*. Houbigant renders the clause, *Nor will he return to his house before the full moon*; which the woman plainly gives as a reason for removing all apprehensions and fears of detection from the simple youth whom she is soliciting to destruction.

Ver. 22, 23. *He goeth after her straightway, &c.*] Dr. Grey renders these verses thus: *He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter; as a dog to the chain, and as a deer, till the dart strike through his liver: as a bird hasteth, &c.* Here are four similes, says he; the ox, the dog, the deer, the bird; each of them aptly resembling the case of a youth seduced by an adulterous woman, and hastening to ruin without fear or thought. The circumstance of the dart as applied to the deer, is beautiful and proper, which otherwise we are at a loss to dispose of. The LXX and Syriac read, *As a dog to the chains, or as a stag pierced through his liver with a dart*. Houbigant. *As a stag runneth leaping along, till a dart pierce through its liver*. See his note.

Ver.

23 Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

26 For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

27 Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

C H A P. VIII.

The fame, and evidence of wisdom. The excellency, the nature, the power, the riches, and the eternity of wisdom. Wisdom is to be desired for the blessedness that it bringeth.

DOth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?

2 She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.

3 She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.

4 Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

5 O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

6 ¶ Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be

right things.

7 For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

8 All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.

9 They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

10 ¶ Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

11 For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

12 ¶ I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength,

15 ¶ By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

Ver. 26. For she hath cast down] The LXX read, She hath cast down many whom she hath wounded; and they whom she hath slain are innumerable. There are those who read, She hath caused many soldiers to fall, and a great many brave, or strong men, have been slain by her. The verse may be paraphrased thus: "The most valiant heroes, the most puissant soldiers, who have stood undaunted against all other assaults, have generally been vanquished and frequently destroyed by the allurements of women." See Kennicott's Dissert. vol. i. Calmet observes, that Solomon had no need to go further than his own family for unhappy examples of the ill effects of lust. He was, indeed, himself afterwards a sad proof of what he here says. How many lions has the weakness of woman tamed, making a prey of the great ones of the earth! See 2 Sam. xi. xii.

C H A P. VIII.

Ver. 1. Doth not wisdom cry, &c.] We may consider this chapter as connected with the preceding, and making one continued discourse. The wise man has represented in what goes before, the dangerous seductions of pleasure, in the language of an adulterous woman. Here he describes wisdom inviting us to her love, in a noble, grand, elevated discourse, and by magnificent promises of the most solid advantages. From the 1st verse to the 12th she commends her doctrine and precepts; from the 12th to the 32d she extols her divine and excellent works; and from the 32d to the end, she invites to the search of her by the view of the richest recompences. Some of the ancient fathers who have written against the Arians, and many of the most able and pious moderns, understand by this eternal wisdom

the second person of the Divine Trinity; so as to apply some part of the attributes of this wisdom to the divinity, and some to the humanity of the Son of God. See Calmet.

Ver. 2. By the way, &c.] Upon the way, within, or amidst the paths. The LXX read, She hath stood in the middle of the paths.

Ver. 10. Receive my instruction, and not silver] Rather than silver; that is to say, preferably to silver; or it may be, "Give not your heart to money, if you would possess wisdom." It is impossible to join these two things, the love of this world, and the love of wisdom.

Ver. 12. And find out knowledge of witty inventions] And penetrate the knowledge of right things. Schultens; who observes, that the first clause contains a very splendid image, "I wisdom inhabit prudence." So Jehovah is said to inhabit eternity. Calmet says, that the last clause, according to the Hebrew, is, And have invented the knowledge of thoughts; or of prudence, of reflection, of the judicious attention of wise men. It is the eternal wisdom which speaks here. It is she from whom proceed all the lights, and all the knowledge of the wise; all that is true and useful in the understanding and inventions of the human spirit; but, above all, the sciences which tend to holiness and virtue, and which have God for their end.

Ver. 14. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom] Good government. Houbigant; who renders the next clause, Prudence is mine; mine is fortitude.

Ver. 15. By me kings reign] All authority and power come from God; and all those who are established over others have received from the author of this wisdom all their superiority. Whether God gives a prince in his anger,

16 By me princes rule, and nobles, *even* all the judges of the earth.

17 I love them that love me: and those that seek me early shall find me.

18 Riches and honour *are* with me; *yea*, durable riches and righteousness.

19 My fruit *is* better than gold, *yea*, than fine gold: and my revenue than choice silver.

20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:

21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

22 ¶ The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

24 When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth; when *there were* no fountains abounding with water.

25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:

26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

27 When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

30 Then I was by him, *as* one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him;

31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights *were* with the sons of men.

32 ¶ Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed *are they that keep my ways*.

33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

34 Blessed *is* the man that heareth me watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

35 For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and

anger, or in his mercy, it is he who hath established him; nor can they worthily exercise their power without the succours and assistance of wisdom. A prince may be a prince without having wisdom; but without it, he can neither be a good nor a happy prince. Wisdom is the very first of royal qualities. "The best and most excellent present which God can give to men, is a just and virtuous prince, and one like himself:" *Nullum est præstabilius et pulchrius Dei munus erga mortales, quam castus, sanctus, et Deo similis princeps*, says Pliny in his Panegyric of Trajan.

Ver. 17. *I love them that love me*] In order to seek for wisdom with the earnestness that she merits, we must know her, and love her: we must by our continual prayers seek for this excellent good, and intreat God to increase in us the love of wisdom, holiness, and virtue; because, in proportion as this love increases, wisdom will more abundantly communicate herself to us; and the more early in life we begin this search, the more shall we engage the love, and consequently the encouragement, of this divine and blessed monitor.

Ver. 22. *The Lord possessed me in the beginning*] All this, says Calmet, respects the Eternal Wisdom, the Word of the Father. This verse is very similar to John, i. 1. The LXX render it, *He created me the beginning of his ways*; which many interpreters refer to the Incarnate wisdom. The word which Calmet renders, from the LXX, *created*, is *ἐκτίστος*, which may certainly as well signify, agreeably to the Hebrew and Aquila, *He possessed*, or *established*, or *ordained*, or *created*.

Ver. 23. *I was set up from everlasting*] According to the Hebrew, *I have been anointed from all eternity*; which is particularly applicable to Jesus Christ, the anointed of the Father.

Ver. 26. *Highest part*] *Sum*, or *first atom*. Schul- tens.

Ver. 30. *As one brought up with him*] The Hebrew signifies, *As one co-operating*, or *working with him*. This sense is favoured by the LXX, who read, *I was harmonizing*, or *disposing things together with him*. The French render it, *I was with him and regulated all things*. The expression in the next clause denotes the facility, the pleasure, the address of the Almighty work-master, and of Wisdom, by whom, and with whom he created all things; and the admirable variety of the works of nature, where the wisdom of the Creator appears to have rejoiced with so much order and beauty. See Calmet.

Ver. 31. *My delights were with the sons of men*] The wisdom of God communicated itself to men, preferably to all other sensible creatures here below; having given to them alone intelligence, and a soul capable of the illumination of prudence, and the practice of holiness and virtue. The Son of God, the Eternal Wisdom abundantly proved *his delight to be with the sons of men*, when for their instruction and salvation he took upon him a human form. See Baruch iii. 37. Calmet.

Ver. 35. *And shall obtain favour*] Wisdom is the salvation, the happiness, the life of men. All these attributes apply admirably to Jesus Christ. We observe from this chapter,

shall obtain favour of the LORD.

36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth

his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

chapter, that if it be at all to be understood of the Son of God, which the ancient Arians believed, and of which I have no doubt, then not only his eternity is here most plainly asserted, but also his distinct substance and personality. See ver. 22 and 30. The practical lessons to be learned from hence are, first, that it is a vain pretence which we make to wisdom, if the fear of God and true holiness be wanting. Secondly, the whole chapter supposes, and the last verse more particularly expresses, that every man's death and destruction is from himself who wrongs his own soul, and that against the desire and earnest importunities of the wisdom of God. See Bishop Patrick.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, When Jesus came to teach poor mortals the way to life eternal, a voice from the Excellent Glory proclaimed, *This is my beloved Son; hear him.* Let, therefore, every ear attend the divine instructions which he condescends to give.

1. His words are publicly proclaimed in the places of chief concourse, that whosoever will, may come and learn of him. Thus Jesus in the days of his flesh preached openly on mountains, in the city, at the gates of the temple; and his prophets of old, his apostles and evangelists, went forth publishing his word and gospel through the land. All are addressed; high and low, rich and poor; and the foolish and simple, the fallen sinful sons of men, whose understanding is darkened, are invited to come, and find wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, in him. *Note;* The gospel excludes none who do not exclude themselves. If sinners perish for lack of knowledge, it is because they would not come to him, that they might have life.

2. The importance of the subject demands our most serious attention. *The things* spoken of are *excellent*; the doctrines of grace, the person, offices, and undertaking of the Redeemer, and the inestimable blessings obtained thereby; the knowledge of God and an eternal world, with all the glories there provided for wisdom's children. They are *right*, most becoming in God to command, and most fit for us to obey. They are doctrines of *truth*, they concern him who is the truth, and cannot deceive; for WICKEDNESS is an abomination to his lips: and, as lying is his abhorrence, it should be also ours. All his words are in *righteousness*, perfectly corresponding thereunto. *There is nothing froward or perverse in them*, but the most entire harmony and suitableness. They are *plain*, and easy to be understood by all whose minds are spiritually enlightened, and really desire without prejudice to come to the sacred oracles of truth for information; though to the wisest scholar, a stranger to divine teaching, they are foolishness and darkness; and *right to them that find knowledge*, who readily submit to the dictates of wisdom, and approve of the perfect path that God's word points out to them. They are preferable to the riches of both the Indies, more desirable than gold and silver, or rubies, and all the delights of the sons of men. And in proportion as we have learned Christ, and been taught of him, in such measure will our hearts be weaned

from all inordinate delight in earthly things, and count them dung and loss, compared with the excellency of the knowledge of him and his truth.

2dly, Thus speaks he, like unto whom never man spake. His own glory and excellence are the subject; and we may truly say, He is the chief of ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

1. In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. *I wisdom*, the essential wisdom, the all-wise God, *dwell with prudence*, possess it in all its fulness, and *find out knowledge of witty inventions*; either detect the devices of the crafty, and search into the hearts of the children of men; or *the inventions* here spoken of relate to the astonishing contrivance of the covenant of grace, wherein all the perfections of God, his free grace and inexorable justice, inviolable truth, and boundless mercy, are so eminently displayed, and so highly magnified; and wherein the miserable sinner beholds in Jesus Christ a holy God, righteous and just in forgiving his sins.

2. He hath a perfect hatred of sin; and all who are taught of him abhor the thing which is evil. *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil*; this is the constant effect produced wherever that fear is implanted, and this because God hates it. *Pride and arrogancy*, high thoughts of ourselves and services, he abhors. *The evil way*, sin of every kind, and *the froward mouth*, which speaks in violence or rage, *do I hate*. If we are spiritually proud, and our passions and frowardness unmortified, we are not wisdom's children, but of our father the devil.

3. In him resides all wisdom and strength in perfection for the government of all things; and out of his fulness must we in every station receive wisdom and power for all the work and duty to which he calls us. By him ordained, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, his vicegerents upon earth, kings, princes, and judges, are commissioned to bear rule; and resistance against their lawful authority is rebellion against God. He can endue them with capacities for their high station; and they then rule well, when their own hearts are brought under the guidance and government of his word and Spirit.

4. He will shew all affection and favour to those who love and seek him. *I love them that love me; and they that seek me early*, with eagerness, or in the morning of youth, or the accepted time, *shall find me*, and therewith every blessing of grace and glory.

5. He hath all riches and honour to bestow, as much as is for their good in this world; and with what peculiar satisfaction, that they are obtained in *righteousness* under the divine blessing. But rather the riches of grace, and the honour which cometh from God are intended; riches which are *durable*, not like the perishing substance of earth, but incorruptible, in the heavens; and honours transcendently great, and abiding to eternity; possessed in virtue of the infinite merit of Jesus, the great meritorious cause of all our present and eternal happiness. *My fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold*; the fruits of his undertaking for us; such as redemption, reconciliation, adoption, &c. the fruits of his Spirit in us, love, joy, peace, &c.

compared

CHAP. IX.

The discipline and doctrine of wisdom. The custom and error of folly.

WISDOM hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:

compared with these, the glittering tinsel of this world's wealth vanishes into nothing, and is less than nothing, and vanity.

6. He guides his followers in the paths of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; neither deviating from it to the right hand nor to the left, that he may bring them to an inheritance in glory; and gives those that love him mansions in the skies, filled with all the treasures of immortal bliss. Happy, for ever happy, the souls that he leads in these blessed paths, and brings, as inheritors of his kingdom, to the thrones provided for them in heaven.

3dly, That not a quality, but a person, is here meant under the character of wisdom, is evident; for to such alone can these properties be ascribed; and that person is the eternal Son of God. Compare *John* 1. 1—4. We have,

1. His eternal co-existence with the father. In person distinct, in essence the same. *In the beginning*, before the earth had a being, before ever the mountains rose, or the waters retired to the bottom of the deep, *the Lord possessed me*, in that mysterious union which subsists between the divine persons in the Godhead. *I was set up from everlasting*, as the wisdom of the Father and the Word of God.

2. His agency in the creation of all things; for by him God made the worlds, and without him was not any thing made that was made. *Eph.* iii. 9. *Heb.* i. 2. In each day's work he was present, not as a spectator merely, but as the great agent; and was first the Creator of all things, before he became incarnate for the redemption of sinners.

3. He was his Father's delight; *brought up with him*: from everlasting the relation subsisted, co-eternal, and co-equal; and *I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him*; which may refer to the fulness of delight subsisting mutually between the sacred persons in the ever-blessed Trinity; or to the complacency of the Father in the Son, and of both in the work of creation, whereof they expressed their approbation, *Gen.* i. 31. or to their satisfaction in the great work of man's redemption, God the Father being well-pleas'd in the Saviour's undertaking, and God the Son rejoicing to fulfil the work which the Father had given him to do.

4. Toward the sons of men he entertained the most enlarged affection, *rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth*, bestowing upon all, in rich profusion, the bounties of his providence, and the offers of his grace; and his *delights were with the sons of men*; but more especially with those who believe, in whose hearts he takes up his abode, and for whose sake he was content to take our nature upon him, and, through a scene of the most astonishing sufferings, with cheerfulness to accomplish our redemption, satisfied to see at last in his faithful people the redeemed travail of his soul. What amazing love and grace! how are we bound to praise him, trust him, and love him with all our hearts!

VOL. III.

2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.

3 She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city.

4thly, When one so great and glorious speaks, yea, and one to us withal so inexpressibly good and gracious, well may it be expected that every ear should be attention, and every heart obedience.

1. The exhortation is, *Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children; bear instruction, and be wise*; so hear, as to mark, learn, and inwardly digest the sacred truths of gospel grace, and from them obtain sound wisdom: *and refuse it not*; however contrary to flesh and blood the precepts may appear, and mortifying to our fallen nature, we shall find them most healthful to our souls. *Watching daily at my gates*, in prayer, meditation, and all the ordinances and means of grace, public or private, where God dispenses liberally to all who lack and seek wisdom, and upbraideth not, *Jam.* i. 5. *waiting at the posts of my doors*, humbly, patiently, perseveringly, for then he will never send the hungry empty away.

2. Great will be the blessedness of those who hear and obey the dictates of wisdom, and yield up themselves to Christ, to be governed by his word and spirit. *Favour with God*, acceptance of their persons, forgiveness of their sins, a sense of his love, the spirit of adoption, the grace of the Sanctifier, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost: these are the present blessings provided for the faithful in Christ Jesus, *and life*, spiritual and eternal, *found in him*, derived from him, and to be enjoyed with him in the world of bliss and glory. May this blessedness be mine!

3. Dreadful will be the misery of all who reject the Lord Jesus and his gospel. *He that sinneth against me*, by hardened impenitence refusing to return, or in proud self-dependance trusting in their own doings and duties, instead of his grace and merits, *wrongeth his own soul*: they sin against their own mercies, refuse the only remedy which can heal them, and bring down upon themselves wrath to the uttermost. *All they that hate me, love death*. Our fallen nature is enmity against God; every sinner is practically a hater of God; yea, is avowedly so, when he murmurs against the restraints of God's law as severe, and against his threatenings as hard or cruel: but all such *love death*, not intentionally indeed, but it is the necessary consequence of their ways; they choose the paths of sin, and thereby court their own destruction. They perish because they will perish, and in hell will have none to upbraid but themselves.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. Wisdom hath builded her house] This is a most splendid allegory, says Schultens, in which Wisdom is conceived as a queen, sitting in her royal palace, and inviting mortals to a banquet, plentifully furnished with the richest dainties, that they may be fed with celestial delights for a blessed immortality. This parable gains great light from that of the nuptial feast, delivered by our Saviour, *Matt.* xxii. Many of the ancient fathers applied this to the church, and to our Saviour's human nature, who him-

Y y

self

4 Whofo is simple, let him turn in hither : as for him that wanteth understanding, the faith to him,

5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.

6 Forsake the foolish, and live ; and go in the way of understanding.

7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame ; and he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth himself a blot.

8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee : rebuke a wife man, and he will love thee.

9 Give instruction to a wife man, and he will

be yet wiser : teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom ; and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.

11 For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.

12 If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself : but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

13 ¶ A foolish woman is clamorous : she is simple, and knoweth nothing.

14 For she sitteth at the door of her house,

self styles his body a *holy house*, or temple ; perhaps in allusion to this fine allegory. See John ii. 19. Various have been the endeavours of commentators to apply every circumstance in this description ; but it has been well observed, that whoever would do so will find themselves in a great error, and quite ignorant of the nature of parabolical writings ; for parables may be compared to historical paintings, which are intended to convey a general idea, which is to be gathered from the collective body of images, not from any particular figure : the minute circumstances are to be considered only as heightenings of the piece ; but the conclusion, or general maxim, is to be drawn from the scope and assemblage of the whole. This is a continuance of the parable begun in the former chapter, says Calmet ; where Wisdom is represented to us as a venerable woman, whose real beauties and solid promises are opposed to the delusions of Pleasure ; who in the 7th chapter is painted under the idea of a debauched and impudent woman. She, to entice young persons to her snares, gives a description of the *perfumes*, the *bed*, the *feast*, which she has prepared for them. Wisdom, to engage disciples, does the same thing ; but, instead of debauchery, false pleasures, and vice, which Voluptuousness promises them, Wisdom offers to her guests a solid and magnificent dwelling of sweet but chaste delights, of salutary instructions, and a happy life.

Ver. 3. *She hath sent forth her maidens*] *The maidens of Wisdom*, says Calmet, are the apostles and first preachers of the gospel, who invite all people to the study of wisdom, to the faith of Jesus Christ, and to the practice of holiness and virtue. *Upon the highest places of the city*, we may read, *Upon the tops of the highest places*, &c. Calmet supposes, that the sacred writer refers here to the tops of the houses, conformably to what our Saviour says, Matt. x. 27. *What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops.*

Ver. 4. *Whofo is simple, let him turn in hither*] Wisdom invites the simple, the ignorant, those who have the innocence and simplicity of children. See 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

Ver. 5. *Eat of my bread, &c.*] That is, "Attend to, receive, and practise my precepts." Our blessed Lord may be understood in this sense, John, vi. 53.

Ver. 7. *He that reproveth a scorner*] This and the following verse supply us with a reason for the conduct of

Wisdom in addressing herself only to the simple. She invites not the pretendedly wise, those who think they are ignorant of nothing : to invite them to the feast of wisdom, would be to expose herself to their insults and censures. They think they have nothing to do with it. They would receive the invitation with disdain ; they would despise the lessons of Wisdom ; they would reject with disgust her wine and her viands. These *scorners* admirably represent the genius of libertines and professed infidels. The words, *Getteth himself a blot*, mean, "Instead of convincing or reforming such a one by his reproofs, he will find himself accused of the same crimes by the person whom he endeavours to amend." When a man instructs a scorner, his time which he thus employs is thrown away ; others deride his pains as a labour ill-placed ; and the scorner himself also despises the knowledge which he is taught : *Thus a man is put to shame.*

Ver. 10. *Understanding*] Schultens, Calmet, and many others, render this *Prudence* ; Christian prudence, true prudence, which consists in discerning what is more or less advantageous in all matters, and in choosing the means proper for execution, is undoubtedly the knowledge of the *Holy* ; for it is by this that they are conducted through divine grace in the right way to heaven, and avoid the dangers which destroy so many thoughtless and imprudent persons. Some understand the text differently ; *The knowledge of holy things is the true prudence.* Others translate the whole verse thus ; *The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and the beginning of prudence is the knowledge of holy things ; as the law of God, his worship, &c.*

Ver. 13. *A foolish woman, &c.*] We have here another allegorical picture, describing Folly under the person of a harlot, who fascinates with her enticements, and offers also her dainties to her guests ; but dainties tainted with the most subtil poison. The Hebrew, rendered a *foolish woman*, is more strong ; *the woman of folly אשת כסילות eisheth keisiluth*, folly herself bearing the character of a harlot. You have the image of concupiscence, and pleasure, whom all the philosophers have represented under this idea. Her characters, expressed to the life, are, 1. That she is obstreperous, tumultuous, in a perpetual heat and restlessness of passion. 2. That she is *פתיות* *petaiuth*, madness itself, mere dissoluteness and deception ; and 3. She cares not whatever happens. It is an *apostrophe*, which expresses the highest degree

on a seat in the high places of the city,

15 To call passengers who go right on their ways.

16 Whofo is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, the faith to him,

17 Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

18 But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.

degree of atrociousness. Schultens. Dr. Grey would render it, *A woman of folly is clamorous, and knoweth not shame.*

Ver. 16. Whofo is simple] This is a most specious and artful detortion of the address of Wisdom; by which she would insult the friends of religion, truth, and holiness.

Ver. 17. Stolen waters are sweet] A proverbial expression for illicit pleasures; the Greeks and Latins make use of the same phrase. See chap. v. 15. and Calmet. One of the profitable lessons to be learned from this chapter is, that there is nothing more inconsistent with wisdom, than the service of those impure lusts, which have been the ruin of all those who have been led by them; and therefore with this the wise man concludes his preface to the book of proverbs; again repeating (ver. 10.) that first principle upon which all religion is built, and wherewith he began his preface, *that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* Indeed, there is no true wisdom but religion. The reader cannot but be pleased with the following passage from the excellent Bishop Berkeley's *Minute Philosopher*; a work which well deserves the most careful perusal. "To suppose a society of rational agents, acting under the eye of Providence, concurring in one design to promote the common benefit of the whole, and conforming their actions to the established laws and order of the divine parental wisdom; wherein each particular agent shall not consider himself apart, but as the member of a great city, whose author and founder is God; in which the civil laws are no other than the rules of virtue, and the duties of religion; and where every one's interest is combined with his duty;—to suppose this would be delightful. On this supposition, a man need be no stoic or knight-errant to account for his virtue. In such a system vice is madness, cunning is folly, wisdom and virtue are the same thing; where, notwithstanding all the crooked paths and by-roads, the wayward appetites and inclinations of men, sovereign reason [under sovereign grace] is sure to reform whatever seems amiss, to reduce that which is devious, make straight that which is crooked, and in the last act wind up the whole plot, according to the exactest rules of wisdom and justice. In such a system or society, governed by the wisest precepts, enforced by the highest regards and discouragements, it is delightful to consider how the regulation of laws, the distribution of good and evil, the aim of moral agents, do all conspire in due subordination to promote the noblest end, to wit, the complete happiness or well-being of the whole. In contemplating the beauty of such a moral system, we may cry out with the Psalmist, *Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God!*" See Min. Phil. vol. i. p. 183.

REFLECTIONS.—When in the days of his flesh the Wisdom of God appeared upon earth, he chose for the most part to convey his divine instructions by parables, a method which he had used of old, to communicate the mysteries of his gospel. So here,

1. A rich entertainment is provided in a sumptuous palace for Wisdom's guests. *She hath builded her house*, the church upon earth, founded on Christ, the rock of ages, and gloriously adorned with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit therein abundantly dispensed; or the heavenly mansions provided for the saints' everlasting rest, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. *She hath beworn out her seven pillars*; intimating the stability and perpetuity thereof, seven being the number of perfection; or referring to the constant provision of wise and able ministers, qualified with gifts and graces for the edifying of the body of Christ, and the support of the interests of his church and people. *She hath killed her beasts, or her sacrifice; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.* The sacrifice is a crucified Jesus, offering himself upon the cross for sinners. The wine is his blood, the richest cordial to the guilty soul. The table is furnished with all the blessings of grace, pardon, righteousness, peace, strength, consolation; the provision Jesus himself has made, and freely offers to every poor and hungry sinner.

2. An invitation is sent to them. *She hath sent forth her maidens*, the ministers of the gospel, appointed and sent to publish the glad tidings of salvation. *She crieth upon the highest places of the city*, as our Lord himself did at Jerusalem; and his servants continue to lift up their voice, with zeal and earnestness delivering their message. *Whofo is simple, let him turn in hither*; even every soul which, conscious of its spiritual ignorance, desires to be taught the lessons of divine truth. *As for him that hath no understanding*, at least not distinguished by any attainments of science, *she saith unto him, Come, eat of my bread*, feed upon the delicacies provided, and *drink of the wine which I have mingled*; welcome to the festal board, to the wine and milk of gospel-grace; *Eat, O my Friends; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved*; for here no excess is to be feared. They who feed upon Christ and his love, cannot come with desires too enlarged; yea, blessed are they that hunger and thirst, for they shall be filled.

3. An admonition is given to the guests. *Forsoke the foolish, and live*; the company of sinners, whose works are folly, and their wages death: these we must leave, have no fellowship with them, that we may live to God, quickened by his Spirit, and go in the way of understanding; the way of grace, peace, holiness, and glory, which the word of God lays open and plain before us, and in which all who come to Jesus Christ ought henceforth to walk, even as he also walked.

CHAP. X.

From this chapter to the five-and-twentieth, are sundry observations upon moral virtues, and their contrary vices.

THE proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing; but righteousness delivereth from death.

3 The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

4 He becometh poor that dealeth *with* a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

5 He that gathereth in summer *is* a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest *is* a son that causeth shame.

6 Blessings *are* upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

7 The memory of the just *is* blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.

9 He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely, but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

10 He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. The proverbs of Solomon] Here properly the book of Proverbs begins: What has gone before is a kind of preface or introduction to the work. Solomon has exhorted his disciple to the study of wisdom, by the most interesting motives; the beauty, the utility, the necessity of wisdom. He has shewn him the dangers which they run who neglect it: he has cautioned him against debauchery and libertinism. After this he comes to those moral sentences which were his principal design. See the introductory note to this book. There is a great variety in these sentences; which are generally delivered by way of antithesis; i. e. comparing opposites one with another. No great connexion is to be expected in them; their instruction is various and extensive, almost every verse being a lesson by itself. Bishop Hall has been at great pains to digest and methodize these proverbs, which he has done under the heads of *ethics, politics, and economics*. See the first volume of his works, p. 181.

A wise son maketh a glad father] This first sentence seems not to have been casually set forth in the front of the rest; because nothing contributes so much to the happiness of mankind, as a religious care about the education of children; which parents are here admonished to attend to, if they desire their children should not prove a grief and shame to them. Lord Bacon thinks that the *gladness* and *heaviness* which are in fathers and mothers, according as their children prove good or bad, are here so accurately distinguished by Solomon, that he would represent a wise and well-governed son, to be chiefly a *comfort* to the father, who knows the value of wisdom better perhaps than the mother (which account the Hebrews also give of this matter), and therefore rejoices more at the towardliness of his son; which he not only better understands, but has taken perhaps so much care about his education, that the good fruits of it give him a greater joy than they can do to the mother. She, on the other side, is more *grieved* and *discomforted* at the calamity of the son; both because the affection of a mother is more soft and tender, and perhaps because she may be conscious to herself that by too much indulgence she hath tainted and corrupted his

tender years. See Advancement of Learning, book viii. cap. 2.

Ver. 2. Righteousness delivereth from death] The meaning seems to be, that justice, holiness, and virtue, constitute the true riches of a man; which, whosoever is wise enough to lay up, procures to himself an impregnable asylum. See chap. xi. 4. and Schultens. Le Clerc thinks that *righteousness* means *innocence*; which being once proved, the person falsely accused will be cleared. The reader will observe, that in this, as in the other poetical books of Scripture, the hemistichs correspond each to the other; and an attention to this will serve greatly to elucidate a variety of passages.

Ver. 6. But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked] *But his own cruel violence shall cover the mouth of the wicked.* That is, "The curses, imprecations, and other violence which the wicked vomit forth, shall redound upon their own mouth, and shall overwhelm them with all confusion." See *ver. 11.* Schultens. Houbigant renders it, *Contempt shall cover the face of the wicked.*

Ver. 7. The memory of the just is blessed] Eusebius observes, that Plato has transferred this observation into his seventh book of laws; concerning which Lord Bacon makes the following remarks in the place quoted; "That the name of good men, after envy is extinguished, which cropped the blossom of their fame while they were alive, presently shoots up and flourisheth, and their praises generally increase in strength and vigour; but for wicked men, though their fame, through the partial favour of friends and of men of their own faction, may last for a little time, a detestation of their name springs up not long after; and at last those vanishing praises end in infamy, and, like bodies which putrify, expire in a filthy and noisome odour."

Ver. 8. The wise in heart will receive commandments] *He who is wise in heart, will receive the commandment; he who has foolish lips, will stubbornly refuse it.* Houbigant.

Ver. 10. But a prating fool shall fall] We have remarked in a former note, that these proverbs consist of hemistichs, the second of which, an ingenious writer observes, farther strengthens and illustrates the first, either by its contrariety or connexion: but what contrariety or connexion is there between

11 The mouth of a righteous *man* is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod *is* for the back of him that is void of understanding.

14 Wise *men* lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish *is* near destruction.

15 The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city: the destruction of the poor *is* their poverty.

16 The labour of the righteous *tendeth* to life; the fruit of the wicked to sin.

17 He *is in* the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

18 He that hideth hatred *with* lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, *is* a fool.

19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips *is* wise.

20 The tongue of the just *is as* choice silver: the heart of the wicked *is* little worth.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

22 The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

23 *It is* as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.

24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

between these hemistichs? In the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, we find the first beautifully illustrated by an antithesis in the second:

He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow,
But he that reproveth freely worketh safety.

Maxims worthy of Solomon. When a man connives at his friend's failings, either silently upholding, or deceitfully applauding his unworthy actions, the offender is encouraged to sin on, and heap up matter for very sorrowful reflections afterwards; but the man who, with an honest freedom, prudently reproves him, most effectually contrives his honour and safety. See Kennicott's Dissert. vol. 1. and Houbigant's note on the place.

Ver. 12. *Love covereth all sins*] St. Peter appears to have had this passage in view, Ep. i. chap. iv. 8. See the note on that place, and Bishop Sherlock's Discourses, vol. iii. disc. 6.

Ver. 14. *Wise men lay up knowledge*] That is, says Schultens, wise men keep secretly reposed within them the knowledge of any business or affairs wherewith they are entrusted: but the mouth of the foolish, incapable of retaining any secret, occasions ruin to himself and to those who have any concerns with him. Others think the meaning is, that wise men do not hastily and ostentatiously discover all they know. But the foolish, full of precipitation and temerity in their discourse, expose themselves and others to all the dangers of a prattling tongue. We ought to think more than we speak: nature has given us two eyes and two ears, and only one tongue; *Nam nunquam tacuisse nocet, nocet esse locutum.* See Calmet.

Ver. 17. *He is in the way of life, &c.*] *He is in the way of life who observeth discipline.* Houbigant and Schultens. The LXX read, *Instruction or discipline keepeth the way of life.*

Ver. 18. *He that hideth hatred, &c.*] The LXX read, *Honest lips hide hatred; but they who utter reproaches, are the greatest fools;* and the Syriac, *The lips of the wicked hide hatred; and he that uttereth a curse is a fool.* Nothing more easy than to conceal malice. Dissembling, which is lying,

does it very securely; it will be long before it be discovered; and the uttering, the transmitting a slander, makes no such present noise that the author may be discerned; yet, with all his craft, he is but a fool, and wants sense as well as honesty. He will find that he is observed by One who can order him to be repaid in his own coin, and set a more wicked person than himself over him, to prepare a condemnation for him before he is judged or heard: as he loved calumnies, and delighted in obloquies and lies, so they shall cover him as a garment, and hide the little good which is in him from the eyes of all men. To make his misery complete, he shall find none to pity him; and when his calumny is at the highest, all who knew him shall think it less than he deserved: his posterity shall inherit his infamy; and his sin and his punishment shall be kept in remembrance from generation to generation.

Ver. 20. *Is little worth*] The LXX read, *shall fail;* the Syriac, *is gall;* and the Chaldee, *is contrition:* but Schultens seems to have hit upon the right interpretation. He renders it, *is like dross.* As the tongue of the just is compared to choice silver, so the heart of the wicked is compared to dross, or the basest refuse of metals. See chap. xxv. 4. Isai. i. 22.

Ver. 21. *The lips of the righteous feed many*] i. e. *Instruct many:* and so it is rendered in several of the versions.

Ver. 22. *The blessing of the Lord, &c.*] *The blessing of the Lord procureth riches, and giveth not sorrow as a companion with them.* Houbigant.

Ver. 23. *But a man of understanding hath wisdom*] *But a prudent man restrains himself: Frenatio adest viro prudenti.* Schultens.

Ver. 24. *The fear of the wicked, &c.*] Wicked men frequently draw upon themselves what they feared, by the very means whereby they studied to avoid it; a remarkable example whereof, Bochart observes, we have in the builders of the tower of Babel; the very remedy of the evil that they wished to avoid, leading them directly to it.

Ver.

25 As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.

27 The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

28 The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.

29 The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

30 The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.

31 The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.

32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.

C H A P. XI.

A FALSE balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them; but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath:

but righteousness delivereth from death.

5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.

7 When a wicked man dieth, his expectations shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.

8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.

9 An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

10 When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.

11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

14 Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

15 He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure.

16 A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches.

Ver. 26. As vinegar to the teeth] "A negligent dilatory servant vexes and rives, as it were, with trouble those who send him; just as keen vinegar gives pain to the teeth, and bitter smoke vexes and torments the eyes." See Schultens.

Ver. 32. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable] The LXX read, *The lips of the righteous distil graces;* and the Syriac, *The lips of the righteous acknowledge a kindness or benefit.* The righteous make it their study to hurt nobody by their words; but, on the contrary, to speak always according to the dictates of a good and honest heart: while the wicked discover the badness of their heart by the malevolence of their discourse.

C H A P. XI.

Ver. 1. A false balance, &c.] See Lev. xix. 35. This rule may hold, not in commerce only, but also in our

judgments, and in our whole conduct towards our neighbour. In every thing respecting him, employ the balance of equity, void of all selfish views, passions, and prejudices. Let justice and truth ever hold the scale; and always do to him what you would have done to yourself.

Ver. 7. And the hope of unjust men perisheth] His vain hope shall perish. Houbigant. *Even his highest hope most grievously perisheth.* Schultens. The LXX preserve the contrast in the verse more strongly: *The just man dying, his hope doth not perish; but the boasting of a wicked man doth perish.*

Ver. 16. A gracious woman retaineth honour] The LXX, Syriac, and Arabic versions have two hemistichs which are here omitted; namely, the second of this, and the first of the next verse. They read, *A gracious woman raiseth honour to her husband; but a woman who hateth righteousness is a throne of disgrace. The slothful, though rich, shall come to poverty;*

17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but *he that is* cruel troubleth his own flesh.

18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness *shall be* a sure reward.

19 As righteousness *tendeth* to life: so he that pursueth evil, *pursueth* it to his own death.

20 They that are of a froward heart *are* abomination to the LORD: but *such as are* upright in *their way are* his delight.

21 *Though* hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

22 *As* a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, *so is* a fair woman which is without discretion.

23 The desire of the righteous *is* only good: but the expectation of the wicked *is* wrath.

24 There is that scattereth, and yet in-

creaseth; and *there is* that withholdeth more than is meet, but *it tendeth* to poverty.

25 The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing *shall be* upon the head of him that selleth it.

27 He that diligently seeketh good, procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind; and the fool *shall be* servant to the wife of heart.

30 The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life; and he that winneth souls *is* wise.

31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

poverty; but the laborious shall retain their riches. See Wall, and Kennicott's Dissert. vol. i. The words may be read, *obtaineth* and *obtain*. The greater number of the additions of the LXX, says Calmet, are only glosses, or frigid and useless repetitions.

Ver. 17. His own flesh] His own relations, it may mean, as well as *his own body;* for the Hebrews frequently call their brethren or relations their flesh. See Gen. xxix. 14.; 2 Sam. xix. 13.

Ver. 21. Though hand join in hand] Most interpreters, by *hand in, hand,* understand the hands of divers persons; but some take it for the hands of one and the same person, and accordingly understand the passage thus; either that, though a sinner endeavour to hide his sin as a man does the thing which he holds in one hand, and covers with the other, he shall, notwithstanding, be found out, and suffer for it; or that, though wicked men do nothing, but like an idle person have their hands folded one in the other, yet they are not free from sin, which they are devising in their mind, and which will draw a just vengeance upon them. Houbigant renders the next clause, *But the arm of the righteous shall deliver them.* See chap. xvi. 5. The plain meaning of the verse seems to be, that the wicked, though uniting all his efforts, and strengthening himself by every possible means, shall find all his earthly hopes and reliances vain. He shall certainly meet with condign punishment; while the arm of the righteous, strengthened by the invincible protection of God, shall deliver him from every danger.

Ver. 22. As a jewel of gold, &c.] See Job, xlii. 11. The meaning is, "As a jewel of gold would be ill placed in the snout of a swine, which is always raking in the mire; so is beauty ill bestowed on a woman, whose mind, having lost all relish of virtue, carries her from her husband, to wallow in filthy lust and adulterous plea-

ures." See Bishop Patrick, and Bochart de Animal. pars i. lib. ii. c. 57.

Ver. 26. He that withholdeth corn] The truth of this is experienced in all times of scarcity. They who have the hardness of heart to withhold their corn at such seasons, are accursed of God and men. The justice of God fails not to display itself upon those who are insensible to the miseries of the public, and who are not afraid to bring upon themselves the hatred and curses of the people. The Latins have a proverb parallel to this of Solomon. *Qui flagellat annonam, Dardanarius.* See Amos, viii. 5, 6, 7, and Calmet.

Ver. 29. He that troubleth his own house] That is, either dissipates his substance by extravagance, or sows division and discord among his friends and relations. Lord Bacon takes this for a profitable admonition touching discords in families, and domestic breaches [but it may as well be applied to whole kingdoms, which are larger families]; which whosoever cherishes among his children, or servants, or people, as a means to have his affairs better administered when they have an evil eye upon and hate one another, commonly finds his hopes turn into wind. For those alterations and changes generally succeed ill, and those disturbers of their own families oftentimes meet with vexations and ingratitude from those very persons whom, passing by others, they adopt as the objects of their especial favour: nay, by this means they often draw upon themselves ill reports and doubtful rumours; for it is not ill observed by Cicero, that all reports, both good and bad fame, come from domestics; which two evils Solomon expresses by *inheriting the wind:* for the frustrating of expectations, and raising of rumours, are rightly compared to winds. See *A Discourse of Learning,* as above, and chap. xv. 7.

Ver. 31. Behold, &c.] If David, if Job, if the apostles

C H A P. XII.

WHOSO loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

2 A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.

3 A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.

6 The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.

7 The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.

8 A man shall be commended according to

his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.

9 He that is despised and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.

10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.

12 The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.

13 The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble.

14 A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth, and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.

15 The way of a fool is right in his own

and choicest servants of God, have been tried in this world by affliction, what must await the impious and the sinners? If God does not even pardon the just the faults which they may commit; how can the wicked, whose whole life is but one series of crimes, flatter themselves with impunity? The LXX read, *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* And their translation is followed by St. Peter, Ep. I. chap. iv. 18. and the Syriac and Arabic.

C H A P. XII.

Ver. 1. Who loveth instruction] Or, according to others, *correction, or reproof.* It is well observed, that if a man cannot endure to be told of his faults, it is a shrewd sign that he is in the way to be undone, and has not yet approached so much as to the gates of wisdom.

Ver. 4. A virtuous woman] *A strong woman*, in the Hebrew, *a woman of diligence or œconomy.* Solomon seems to intend by his appellation, a woman who has all the perfections of her sex; wisdom, modesty, prudence, virtue, and œconomy and good management: and by her *who maketh ashamed*, he means the contrary; and particularly, a woman who dissipates her husband's substance in expensive follies; in the same manner as he called a libertine and prodigal son, *a son that causeth shame.* Chap. x. 5. See chap. xiv. 1. and Calmet.

Ver. 9. He that is despised, and hath a servant, &c.] The passage may be understood; "It is better to be in lowliness and obscurity, and to cultivate one's own little heritage, than to want the necessaries of life, through a foolish vanity, which refuses to labour." It is not labour, but idleness which ought to cause shame. Calmet.

Ver. 10. A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast] Lord Bacon observes upon this verse, that there is implanted in man's nature [by Divine grace] a noble and

excellent affection of pity and compassion, called here *mercy* (for the word rendered *righteous*, signifies *mild, clement, merciful*), which mercy extends itself even unto brute creatures, that are by divine ordination subject to his command. Therefore this compassion hath some analogy with that of a prince toward his subjects; nay, further, it is most certain, that the worthier any soul is, the larger is its compassion: for contracted and degenerate minds imagine these things pertain not to them; but the mind which looks upon itself as a nobler portion of the universe, is kindly affected towards inferior creatures, from the communion that there is between them: wherefore we see that there were under the old law many precepts concerning this; which were not so much merely ceremonial, as institutions of mercy. See more on this subject in the Advancement of Learning, b. viii. c. 2. The next clause means, "the very kindnesses of the wicked, being treacherous, are a cruel cheat; nay, the highest expressions which they make of tenderness and compassion, whereby they induce others to repose a trust in them, are intended merely as a cover for the mischief which they mean more securely to do them." The Greeks have a proverb nearly to the same purpose, *Ἐχθρῶν δῶρα ἀδωρὰ*, "The gifts of enemies are no gifts." See a pleasing discourse on this text, entitled, "Clemency to Brutes."

Ver. 11. He that tilleth, &c.] The LXX add to this verse, *He that taketh a pleasure in taverns, shall leave disgrace in his own fortress.*

Ver. 12. The wicked desireth, &c.] *The wicked earnestly desireth the hunting of evil.* Schultens. Houbigant reads it very differently, *A tempter shall shake the device of the wicked: the root of the just shall be firm.*

Ver. 13. The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips] i. e. A wicked man is himself ensnared by his prevarications.

Ver.

eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel *is* wife.

16 A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent *man* covereth shame.

17 *He that* speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.

18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise *is* health.

19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue *is* but for a moment.

20 Deceit *is* in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace *is* joy.

21 There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.

22 Lying lips *are* abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly *are* his delight.

23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.

24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.

25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.

26 The righteous *is* more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.

27 The slothful *man* roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man *is* precious.

28 In the way of righteousness *is* life; and in the path-way thereof there *is* no death.

CHAP. XIII.

A WISE son beareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.

3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his

Ver. 15. The way of a fool, &c.] The danger of self-love and self-conceit is here represented; which have ever this effect, that they make men slight, if not reject, good counsel, out of a vain opinion that none can advise them better than themselves; which is, to follow the direction of a fool: for it is as certain a note of folly to rely wholly upon a man's own judgment, as it is of prudence to hearken to the advice of others.

Ver. 16. A fool's wrath is presently known, &c.] Solomon does not approve those who disguise and conceal their repentment till they find a proper opportunity to avenge themselves; but he condemns those who have not the power to repress the first motions of their passions. They who moderate the first heat of their wrath are more likely to extinguish it wholly in future. See Calmet.

Ver. 19. The lip of truth shall be established] The LXX read, *True lips establish testimony; but a hasty witness hath an unrighteous tongue.* Houbigant renders it, *Perpetuity is in the lip of truth; the tongue of falsehood is for a point of time.*

Ver. 22. Lying lips are abomination to the Lord] "The Lord (says Melancthon on this verse) recommends to us the love and care of truth, both in doctrines concerning himself, and in arts, and all honest covenants and contracts: for truth being among the chiefest and most conspicuous virtues, therefore the contrary vice is condemned by an expressive word, תועבה *toeibab*, abomination: that is, such an evil as God detests with a singular indignation (for idols are called תועבות *tseiboth*, abominations); which is principally true of such lies as are invented on purpose to destroy men's fame; and much more of such as are devised for the taking away their the ruin of their lives, and families."

Ver. 27. The slothful man roasteth not, &c.] Schultens thinks this verse parallel to the 4th verse of the 10th chapter; and he renders it, *A self-deceiving sloth will not*

even hunt; but the opulence of a diligent man is great. See his note. The LXX render the last clause, *A pure man is a precious acquisition.* The author of the *Observations* remarks, that there is something particular in the word חַרַךְ *charak*, used in this passage of Solomon; which is not the word commonly used for *roasting*, but signifies rather *singeing*; as appears from Dan. iii. 27. No author, I think, gives us an account what this should mean, understood in this sense. Besides wild boars, antelopes, and hares, which are particularly mentioned by D'Arveaux, when he speaks of the Arabs as diverting themselves with hunting in the Holy Land, Dr. Shaw tells us, all kinds of game are found in great plenty in that country. But I do not remember an account of any thing being prepared for food by *singeing*, which is taken either in hunting or hawking, except hares; which I have somewhere read of as dressed in the east after this manner. A hole being dug in the ground, and the earth scooped out of it laid all around its edge, the brush-wood with which it is filled is set on fire, the hare is thrown unskinned into the hole, and afterwards covered up with the heated earth which is laid round about it; where it continues till it is thought to be done enough, and then, being brought to table, sprinkled with salt, is found to be agreeable food. See *Observations*, p. 182. and *Miscell. Curios.* vol. iii. p. 389. Parkhurst says, that the word חַרַךְ *charak*, which we render *roast*, signifies "to inclose in lattice-work; to confine in a latticed cage or place, as men do what they take in hunting." He renders it, *The deceitful man shall not secure* (namely, in lattice-work) *his prey.*

Ver. 28. In the path-way thereof there is no death] Or, *There is immortality.* The LXX read the clause, *But the way of the revengeful is to death:* and Houbigant, after the Vulgate, *But a devious way leadeth to death.*

life: *but* he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

4 The soul of the sluggard desireth and *bath* nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

5 A righteous *man* hateth lying: but a wicked *man* is loathsome, and cometh to shame.

6 Righteousness keepeth *him that is* upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.

7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet *bath* nothing: *there is* that maketh himself poor, yet *bath* great riches.

8 The ransom of a man's life *are* his riches; but the poor heareth not rebuke.

9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well-advised *is* wisdom.

11 Wealth *gotten* by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but *when* the desire cometh, *it is* a tree of life.

13 Who so despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

14 The law of the wise *is* a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors *is* hard.

16 Every prudent *man* dealth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open *his* folly.

17 A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador *is* health.

18 Poverty and shame *shall be* to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.

19 The desire accomplished is sweet to the

C H A P. XIII.

Ver. 1. A wise son, &c.] A wise son regardeth the instruction of his father, but a son who is a scorner heareth not rebuke. Houbigant.

Ver. 7. There is that maketh himself rich] See 2 Cor. vi. 10. where St. Paul says, *We are as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.* The literal sense of this verse seems to be, "There are those who are rich in their poverty, because they are content; desire nothing more, and use generously and charitably what they have; and there are others, who, in the midst of their riches, are really poor and in necessity, because of their insatiable covetousness or profusion." Some suppose the meaning to be, that there are those, who have the vanity to desire to appear rich, though they are poor; and others who make themselves poor, and would pass for such, though they have abundance. The Latins say well, *Semper avarus eget.* "The covetous man is always in want." See Calmet.

Ver. 8. The ransom of a man's life are his riches] Houbigant renders this, A man bath in his riches whence he may redeem himself; but the poor man findeth no redemption. Bishop Patrick paraphrases the passage thus: "Rich men are not always so happy as they are imagined, for their wealth sometimes only serves to make them accused of high crimes, and then to bring them off for a large sum of money, which they pay to save their lives: but nobody is apt to find fault with the poor, or to bring any charge against them." We may read the latter clause, *The poor heareth no disturbance.*

Ver. 9. The light of the righteous rejoiceth] See chap. iv. 18, 19. Schultens renders it, *The light of the righteous shall shine forth joyfully; but the darkening lamp of the wicked shall be put out.* If there was a difference anciently, as there is now, in Egypt, between the lamps of the poor and of

the prosperous, as to the *brightness and agreeableness of the scent* of the several kinds of oil which they burnt, possibly Solomon might refer to that circumstance in these words. *The light of the righteous rejoiceth;* he uses the brightest burning and most agreeable scented kind of oil; he prospers: *But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out;* he shall not only be poor, but be destroyed, and his house become desolate. It may, however, very possibly refer to the great number of lights which the righteous burned, which might be as numerous almost as those of an illumination in a time of public rejoicing, the families of the wealthy in these countries being extremely numerous; and, according to Maillet, every inhabited apartment has a light burning in it: whereas the wicked shall sink in his circumstances, and have hardly a servant to attend him; yea, shall absolutely perish, and his house become desolate. See *Observations*, p. 108.

*Ver. 10. Only by pride, &c.] The Greeks have a proverb, "A mountain cannot mix with a mountain," i. e. two proud men will never agree together: and the Latins have an excellent saying, *Crede mihi, sapere est, non multum sapere,* "Believe me; to be wise, is not to be overwise;" for they whose minds are infected with a vain opinion of themselves, either cannot see the truth, if it be opposite to their ideas; or if they do, they will not acknowledge it, for fear they should yield, and confess themselves overcome. See Bishop Patrick.*

Ver. 15. Good understanding giveth favour, &c.] A good understanding granteth favour, but the demeanor of the insolent is pertinacious. Schultens. The meaning of the verse seems to be this, says Bishop Patrick; "If a man have understanding enough to be thoroughly good, he will find things favourable to his honest desires; but they who take evil courses meet with great difficulties, and are forced to go backward and forward, and wind and turn every way,

" to

soul: but *it is* abomination to fools to depart from evil.

20 He that walketh with wise *men* shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

21 Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed.

22 A good *man* leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner *is* laid up for the just.

23 Much food *is in* the tillage of the poor: but there is *that is* destroyed for want of judgment.

24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him be-times.

25 The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.

CHAP. XIV.

EVERY wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with

her hands.

2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but *be that is* perverse in his ways despiseth him.

3 In the mouth of the foolish *is* a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

4 Where no oxen *are*, the crib *is* clean: but much increase *is* by the strength of the ox.

5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.

6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and *findeth it* not: but knowledge *is* easy unto him that understandeth.

7 Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not *in him* the lips of knowledge.

8 The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way: but the folly of fools *is* deceit.

9 Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous *there is* favour.

CHAP. XIV.

“ to bring about their ends, or to save themselves perhaps “ from ruin.”

Ver. 19. *The desire accomplished is sweet*] *An honest desire is sweet to the soul, but to depart from evil is hateful to fools.* Houbigant.

Ver. 23. *Much food is in the tillage of the poor*] *Much food is to the tillage of the poor; but the very substance is quite spent by want of judgment.* Schultens. The LXX read, *The just shall dwell in riches many years, but the unrighteous shall perish in a short time.* Melancthon has it, *There is much food in the furrows of the poor; and others reap up without measure; i. e. to no purpose, when a little will suffice; which, however, does not seem to be very agreeable to the Hebrew.*

Ver. 24. *Chasteneth him*] *Instructeth him*, is the rendering of several versions. As the chapter begins with an admonition to hearken to reproof, especially from parents, which is repeated again in the 13th and 18th verses; so here again advice is given to parents not to spare the rod, if reproof will not do. The Lacedemonians, out of an universal love and care for each others good, made it lawful for any man to correct the child of another person, if he saw him do amiss: and if the child complained of it to his father, it was looked upon as a fault in the father if he did not correct him again for making that complaint. For they did not, says Plutarch, look every man after his own children, servants, and cattle; but every man looked upon what was his neighbour's as his own; that there might be, as much as possible a communion among them; and they might take care of what belonged to others, as if they were their own proper goods.

Ver. 1. *Every wise woman*] See chap. xii. 4. and Exod. i. 21. Though to *build the house* is frequently used for increasing posterity, it seems in this place principally to refer to that œconomy and good management by which a wife woman advantages her family. See Tit. ii. 5.

Ver. 3. *In the mouth of the foolish*] Fools often bring upon themselves, by their ungoverned tongues, the correction due to their crimes, their pride, and arrogance.

Ver. 4. *Where no oxen are*] This verse contains an admonition for the man without doors; as the first for the woman within; that he do not neglect his husbandry, of which, it is well known, oxen were the principal instruments, being not only employed in that country in plowing the ground, and carrying home the crop, but also in trading out the corn.

Ver. 6. *A scorner seeketh wisdom, &c.*] He that comes to seek after knowledge, says Lord Bacon, with a mind to scorn and censure, shall be sure to find matter enough for his humour, but none for instruction; one reason of which is, that this humour of deriding all things, in men of this kind, springs from a great pride and conceit of their own wit, which disposes them to seek for wisdom, not from others, but wholly from themselves; and so, as the wife man observes, they are not likely to find it where it is not to be had: when he who attributes less to himself, and hath the humility to listen to instruction, in a short time attains to great wisdom. See Advancement of Learning, b. vii. c. 2. and Bishop Patrick.

Ver. 7. *Go from the presence of a foolish man*] The LXX read

Z z 2

10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness ; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.

11 The house of the wicked shall be overthrown : but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.

12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful ; and the end of that mirth *is* heaviness.

14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways : and a good man *shall be satisfied* from himself.

15 The simple believeth every word : but the prudent *man* looketh well to his going.

16 A wise *man* feareth, and departeth from

evil : but the fool rageth, and is confident.

17 *He that is soon angry* dealeth foolishly : and a man of wicked devices is hated.

18 The simple inherit folly : but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

19 The evil bow before the good ; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

20 The poor is hated even of his own neighbour : but the rich *hath* many friends.

21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth : but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy *is* he.

22 *Do they not err* that devise evil ? but mercy and truth *shall be* to them that devise good.

23 In all labour there is profit : but the talk of the lips *tendeth* only to penury.

read, *All things are contrary to a foolish man ; but wise lips are the arms of understanding.* We may, perhaps, read the passage thus : " Depart from the presence of a fool, and " one who understands not, or regards not, the lips of " knowledge." See Grey.

Ver. 8. The wisdom of the prudent] Lord Bacon renders this verse thus : *A wise man is wary of his way ; a cunning fool seeks evasion.* There be two sorts of wisdom, says he ; the one true and sound, the other counterfeit and false ; which last Solomon hesitates not to call folly. He who applies himself to the former takes heed to his own ways and footings ; foreseeing dangers, studying remedies, using the assistance of good men, and fortifying himself against the wicked : wary how he enters upon a business, and not unprepared for a handsome retreat : attentive to advantages, courageous against impediments, with innumerable other things relating to the government of his own ways and actions. But that other kind is made up altogether of fallacies and cunning devices, and relies wholly upon the hopes of circumventing others, and framing them as it lists. This wisdom the parable rejects, not only as wicked, but as foolish ; for, first, it is not in the number of things which are in our own power, nor is it directed by any constant rule ; but new stratagems must be every day devised, the old failing and growing useless : and, secondly, as soon as a man hath got the name and opinion of a cunning crafty companion, he hath deprived himself utterly of the principal instrument for the management of his affairs ; which is, trust ; and so he will find, by experience, all things go cross to his desires : for, lastly, these arts and shifts, however they promise fair, and much please such as practise them, yet they are commonly frustrated, and, which is worse, end sadly. " Crafty and audacious counsels (says Tacitus " remarkably) are joyful in the expectation, difficult in the " management, and sorrowful in the event." See *Advancement of Learning*, as above.

Ver. 9. Fools make a mock at sin] Or, according to others,

Fools excuse or palliate sin. Houbigant reads the verse, *The dwelling of fools is guilt, of the just is favour.*

Ver. 10. The heart knoweth his own bitterness] " Nobody " can know what another suffers, so well as the sufferer " himself ; and he alone is privy to the greatness of that joy " which springs from the happy conclusion of his suffer- " ings." Houbigant renders the verse, *He who divulges the " trouble of his soul, shall not have another to partake of his joy :* i. e. " He who cannot keep to himself his own afflictions, " but is continually teizing others with the relation of them, " will so weary every one out, as to render them perfectly " indifferent to his good or ill fortune."

Ver. 12. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man] This is an admonition of the weakness of men's judgments, and of all human counsels, which mistake much, and lead men frequently into ruin : " Shadows too often cheat us " of the reality," says one of the ancient Greeks ; against which there is no remedy but the word of God, and invoking his direction.

Ver. 14. And a good man shall be satisfied from himself] *And a good man with his own works.* Houbigant.

Ver. 15. The simple believeth every word] Bochart observes well upon this verse, that as prudence, without simplicity, degenerates into craft ; so simplicity, without prudence, is no better than downright folly. We must follow our Saviour's counsel, and unite the serpent with the dove.

Ver. 17. He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly] *He who is soon angry will deal inconsiderately : a considerate man will endure patiently.* Houbigant. The LXX have it, *A hasty man acteth rashly, but a prudent man endureth many things.*

Ver. 23. In all labour there is profit] *All labour will produce abundance, but garrulity nothing but want.* Houbigant. Solomon here separates the fruit of the labour of the tongue and the labour of the hands ; as if want was the revenue of the one, and wealth the revenue of the other : for it commonly happens, that they who talk liberally, boast much, and promise mighty matters, are beggars ; and receive no

24 The crown of the wise *is* their riches : but the foolishness of fools *is* folly.

25 A true witness delivereth souls : but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.

26 In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence ; and his children shall have a place of refuge.

27 The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

28 In the multitude of people *is* the king's honour : but in the want of people *is* the destruction of the prince.

29 *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding* : but *he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly*.

30 A sound heart *is* the life of the flesh ; but envy the rottenness of the bones.

31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker : but he that honoureth him hath

mercy on the poor.

32 The wicked is driven away in his wickedness : but the righteous hath hope in his death.

33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding : but *that which is* in the midst of fools is made known.

34 Righteousness exalteth a nation : but sin *is* a reproach to any people.

35 The king's favour *is* toward a wise servant : but his wrath is *against* him that causeth shame.

C H A P. XV.

A S O F T answer turneth away wrath : but grievous words stir up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright : but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

benefit by their boastings, or by any thing they discourse of. Nay, rather for the most part, such men are not industrious and diligent in their employments, but only feed and fill themselves with words as with wind. Certainly, as the poet says, *Qui silet est firmus* ; he who is conscious to himself of proficiency in his endeavours, contents himself with inward applause in his own breast, and holds his peace ; but he who knows within himself that he only hunts after vain-glory, and hath nothing else to live upon, talks abundantly, and reports wonder unto others. See Lord Bacon as above.

Ver. 24. But the foolishness of fools is folly] *But their fortunes are a curse to fools* ; thus preserving the opposition with the preceding clause.

Ver. 28. In the multitude, &c.] *The more subjects a prince hath, the more glorious he is* ; but so much the more so, as he loves with more tenderness, as he preserves with more care, and as he governs with more mildness, the people under him. The Scripture and the ancients give kings the name of shepherds, to put them in mind of the application they ought to give to the augmenting of their people, and of the compassionate kindness wherewith they ought to treat them. Calmet.

Ver. 29. He that is slow to wrath, &c.] If we considered patience only as a moral virtue, or as a gracious sobriety and temper in subduing and regulating our affections and passions, as an absence of that anger and rage and fury, which usually transports us upon trivial occasions, we could not but acknowledge the great advantage that men have by it. Solomon requires this to make a wise man : *He that is slow to anger, says he, is of great understanding* ; and, indeed, there is nothing so much corrupts and destroys and infatuates the understanding as anger and passion ; inasmuch as men of very indifferent parts, by the advantage of temper and composure, are much wiser, and fitter for great actions, and are usually more prosperous, than men

of more subtle and sublime parts, of more quickness and fancy, with the warmth and choler which many times attend those compositions.

Ver. 30. A sound heart] *A joyful or congratulating heart* ; a heart which is rejoiced at the prosperity of others, and which derives from thence the greatest satisfaction to itself. This is the import of the word מרפא *marpei*, which we render *sound*, according to Schultens ; and certainly the contrast to the next clause is thus well preserved.

Ver. 34. But sin is a reproach to any people] Schultens renders this, *And the beneficence of nations is their expiation* ; which appears to be perfectly agreeable to the Hebrew : nor can there be a more pleasing or a more just observation. According as nations exercise mercy, compassion, and justice, towards others ; they will obtain the favour and protection of God. It is agreeable to consider the expression in this view, in an age, when, however defective we may be in the estimate of severer moralists, there can be no doubt that the high virtues of benevolence and humanity shine forth among us with a distinguished lustre ; for which we may hope the God of compassions will still look with a favourable eye upon our land, protecting us by his mighty arm, and blessing us with his fatherly kindness. We must here recollect, that nations, *as such*, must be rewarded or punished in this world. *Individuals only* will be responsible on the day of judgment, each for himself.

C H A P. XV.

Ver. 1. A soft answer turneth away wrath] Lord Bacon applies this aphorism particularly to a man's behaviour towards a prince or other great person, when he is angry with him. Solomon advises two things in this case ; the one is, that an answer be made ; the other, that it be soft ; the first of which contains three precepts ; *first*, that you beware of a sad and sullen silence, which either charges the fault wholly upon yourselves, or impeaches your master of injustice ;

3 The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

4 A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life: but perverseness therein *is* a breach in the spirit.

5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

6 In the house of the righteous *is* much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish *doeth* not so.

8 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright *is* his delight.

9 The way of the wicked *is* an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

10 Correction *is* grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: *and* he that hateth reproof shall die.

11 Hell and destruction *are* before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wife.

13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

15 All the days of the afflicted *are* evil: but he that is of a merry heart *hath* a continual feast.

16 Better *is* little with the fear of the LORD, than great treasure and trouble therewith.

17 Better *is* a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but *be that is* slow to anger appeaseth strife.

19 The way of the slothful *man is* as an

justice; as if his ears were not open to a just defence. *Secondly*, that you beware of delaying the answer, and of craving a longer time for your defence; because that plainly betrays you to be devising some cunning and counterfeit apology. *Thirdly*, that by all means an answer be made; an answer, I say, not a mere confession or submission; but with some sprinklings of excuse thrown in here and there [as far as truth will admit of it]; for it is not safe to bear yourself otherwise, unless you have to deal with very generous and noble dispositions, which are rare. But then this answer must be very soft and temperate, not harsh and peremptory; for that will make the business worse than if it had never been meddled with at all: and increase that wrath which you should study to appease [but always with truth on your side]. See Adv. of Learning, book viii. chap. 2.

Ver. 4. A wholesome tongue is a tree of life] *A wholesome tongue, or a tongue which heals, or the health of the tongue, is a tree of life, but when it is perverse it breaks the spirit; or, the perversity, the corruption of the tongue, is the death of the spirit.* A tongue which instructs, which consoles, which pacifies, in a word, a tongue which brings health to the spirit and the heart, is truly a tree of life. But a corrupted, lying, abusive, perverse tongue brings death to the soul; afflicts, irritates, corrupts. The LXX render it, *The health of the tongue is a tree of life, and he that keepeth it shall be filled with the spirit.* Schultens and others would render the Hebrew, "*The medicine of the tongue is a tree of life; but the offence, or corruption of it, is as an impetuous wind which bursteth through and overturneth all things.*" See his note, and Calmet.

Ver. 7. The lips of the wise disperse knowledge] *The lips of the wise keep knowledge; not so the heart of fools.* Houbigant.

Ver. 8. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination]

Melancthon thinks that this is a caution against resting in ceremonious worship, without holiness and moral virtue. See his Treatise concerning the Method of Preaching.

Ver. 15. He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast] A mind conscious of good intentions, though success be wanting, affords truer and purer joy, than all that this world can furnish a man with, either for the enjoyment of his desires, or the repose of his mind. Lord Bacon.

Ver. 17. Better is a dinner of herbs] They eat very little meat in the east in comparison with what we do: bread, dibbs, leban, butter, rice, and a very little mutton, make the chief of their food in the winter, says Dr. Russel, speaking of the common people of Aleppo; as rice, bread, cheese, and fruit, do in the summer. Dr. Shaw gives a like account of the abstemiousness of the Arabs. This sparingness is occasioned, not by animal food being disagreeable to them, but by the strictness of their circumstances. The Arabs abound in cattle; but, being forced to draw all the other conveniences of life from the profit they make of them, they kill very few for their own use. The Israelites were in much the same situation; great strangers to trade and manufactures; their patrimony but small, as they were so numerous; and therefore Solomon might with great propriety describe a ruinously expensive way of living by their frequent eating of flesh, chap. xxiii. 20. which in our country would be expressed in a very different manner. A dinner, however, on herbs alone is not what the ordinary people of Aleppo are obliged to content themselves with, sparing as their way of living is; a thought which may serve to illustrate the present passage, where the contrast between the repasts of the rich and the poor is designed to be strongly marked. See Observations, p. 181. and the ingenious Mr. Seed's Sermon on this text, vol. i. ferm.

hedge of thorns : but the way of the righteous *is* made plain.

20 A wise son maketh a glad father : but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

21 Folly *is* joy to *him that is* destitute of wisdom : but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

22 Without counsel purposes are disappointed : but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth : and a word *spoken* in due season, how good *is it!*

24 The way of life *is* above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

25 The LORD will destroy the house of the proud : but he will establish the border of the widow.

26 The thoughts of the wicked *are* an abomination to the LORD : but *the words* of the pure *are* pleasant words.

27 He that is greedy of gain, troubleth his own house ; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer : but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.

29 The LORD *is* far from the wicked : but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the

heart : and a good report maketh the bones fat.

31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life, abideth among the wise.

32 He that refuseth instruction, despiseth his own soul : but he that heareth reproof, getteth understanding.

33 The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom : and before honour *is* humility.

C H A P. XVI.

THE preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, *is* from the LORD.

2 All the ways of a man *are* clean in his own eyes : but the LORD weigheth the spirits.

3 Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

4 The LORD hath made all *things* for himself ; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

5 Every one *that is* proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD : *though* hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged : and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil.

7 When a man's ways please the LORD,

C H A P. XVI.

ferm. 3. Stalled oxen, or oxen fatted in a stall, were looked upon as the highest entertainment. It is not unworthy of remark, that Homer never sets any other repast than this before his heroes.

Ver. 23. A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth] The meaning is, according to Grotius, " Every one may pique himself on account of his speeches ; but those are truly well spoken which are spoken in season." Agreeably to this interpretation, Houbigant renders it, *Every one applauds himself in that which he hath once spoken ; but how much more excellent is a word in season!*

Ver. 24. The way of life is above to the wise] Or, *The way of life to the wise is above.*

Ver. 30. The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart] *The light of the eyes refresheth the mind ; a good report the marrow of the bones.* Houbigant. In the same manner that the sensible light rejoices a sound eye, and diffuses its pleasure through the whole soul, a good reputation gives pleasure, and contributes to the health of the body. The wise man frequently advises his disciple for a good reputation. He often proposes to him human motives to incline him to virtue and his own good. But it is grace alone which raises the soul to more elevated sentiments, and to the most pure and sacred motives. See chap. x. 7. xxii. 1. and Calmet.

Ver. 1. The preparations of the heart, &c.] Houbigant renders it, *It is in man to prepare discourse within himself ; it is in the Lord to moderate or rule the tongue.* Bishop Patrick says, the Hebrew words run plainly thus ; *Man hath the disposing of the heart: He may, with God's leave and common assistance, intend, propound, resolve within himself, what he will say and do ; but that he shall be able to utter things in that order he hath premeditated, or, if he be able, shall attain the end of his deliberation and eloquent speech, is more than he can undertake ; for that is as the Lord pleaseth.* God, therefore, would have us to acknowledge this our weakness, and to fear and depend upon him ; as it follows, ver. 3.

Ver. 4. The Lord hath made all things for himself, &c.] *The Lord ordereth all things so as to suit his own will ; yea, even the wicked for the day of vengeance.* Patrick. *The Lord hath made all things according to their correspondency ; yea, even the wicked are fitted for, or correspond to, the day of evil.* Le Cene, p. 165. The meaning, according to Schultens, is, that God hath so formed and fashioned this universe, that every thing in it has its due connection and correspondence : evil is as naturally connected with punishment,

he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

8 Better *is* a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.

9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

10 A divine sentence *is* in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.

11 A just weight and balance *are* the LORD's: all the weights of the bag *are* his work.

12 *It is* an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.

13 Righteous lips *are* the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.

14 The wrath of a king *is as* messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.

15 In the light of the king's countenance *is* life; and his favour *is as* a cloud of the latter rain.

16 How much better *is it* to get wisdom than gold? and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver?

17 The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

18 Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

19 Better *it is to be* of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

20 He that handleth a matter wisely, shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy *is* he.

21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.

22 Understanding *is* a well-spring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools *is* folly.

23 The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.

24 Pleasant words *are as* an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

26 He that laboureth, laboureth for himself, for his mouth craveth it of him.

27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips *there is* as a burning fire.

28 A froward man soweth strife, and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

29 A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way *that is* not good.

30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things; moving his lips, he bringeth evil to pass.

31 The hoary head *is* a crown of glory, *if* it be found in the way of righteousness.

32 *He that is* slow to anger, *is* better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.

nishment, as holiness and virtue with happiness and reward.

Ver. 10. A divine sentence is in the lips of the king] These words, according to Melancthon, affirm the whole political order, magistrates, laws, distinction of dominions, contracts, judgments, punishments, to be things ordained by the wisdom of God among men; and since we know political order to be the work of God, we ought to love it, and study to defend it; modestly for God's sake to obey it; give thanks to God who preserves it, and look upon those who would disturb this order as most hateful in the sight of God. See Rom. xiii.

Ver. 15. The latter rain] See Deut. xi. 14. and Joel, ii. 23.

Ver. 21. The wise in heart shall be called prudent] "Profoundness of wisdom," says Lord Bacon, "may help men to fame and admiration; but it is eloquence which prevails in business and active life."

Ver. 27. In his lips there is as a burning fire] See James, iii. 6.

Ver. 32. And he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city] It is far beyond comparison easier to conquer enemies, to take citadels, to subject people, than to conquer passions, to moderate desires, to subdue evil habits, and repress the fallies of wrath and resentment. We read of but few celebrated conquerors who have not been subdued by some passion or other. Horace has finely expressed this sentiment, lib. ii. od. 2.

By virtue's precepts to controul
The thirsty cravings of the soul,
Is over wider realms to reign
Unenvy'd monarch, than if Spain
Thou could'st to distant Lybia join,
And both the Carthages were thine.

FRANCIS.

And Ovid says,

Fortior

33 The lot is cast into the lap: but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.

CHAP. XVII.

BBETTER *is* a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices *with* strife.

2 A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

3 The fining-pot *is* for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.

4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; *and* a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

5 Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: *and* he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

6 Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children *are* their fathers.

7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince.

8 A gift *is* as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth it prospereth.

9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends.

10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.

11 An evil *man* seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.

12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.

13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

Fortior est qui se, quam qui fortissima vincit
Mœnia, nec virtus altius ire potest.

One translation renders the verse, *Qui dominatur animo suo, expugnator est urbium*; "He that can suppress his passions "is even master of all cities; no strength can resist him." So that if we intend nothing but our own ease and advantage, we have reason to apply ourselves to and study this temper; in which the precepts of the philosophers give us ample instructions, and the practices of mere heathen men have left us notable examples; but the obligations of Christianity carry us much farther; we must add to this temperance, *patience*, which is a Christian virtue of the highest qualification.

Ver. 33. The lot is cast into the lap] Lots are to be considered in three different lights; or, more properly, they are of three distinct kinds. One sort is civil balloting, of general use in states to prevent intrigues and partialities; another is a superstitious appeal to the imaginary deity, Chance, or Fortune; and there is yet a third, which is a reference of the event to heaven, by God's own direction and appointment. Of the *second*, or only reprehensible sort, revelation is intirely innocent; because it was customary for the Jewish people to refer all events to God, only and immediately; and the Jewish and Christian lots were confessedly of divine appointment. See Bishop Warburt. View of Bolingbr. Philos. let. iii. p. 37. 8 vol. and Nchem. xi. 1.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. A dry morsel] Bread with pulse, or husks. Bochart and Houbigant. This was the food of meaner persons; whence Horace says, Epist. i. lib. ii. line 123.

Vivit siliquis et pane secundo.

Lives on coarse bread and vegetable fare. DUNCOMBE.
VOL. III.

This verse is plainly similar to the 16th and 17th of chap. xv.

Ver. 2. A wise servant] In all troubled and disagreeing families, there is commonly some servant, or gentle friend, who, being powerful with both sides, may moderate and compose the differences which are among them; to whom, in that respect, the whole house, and the master himself, are much engaged and beholden: this servant, if he aim only at his own ends, cherishes and aggravates the divisions of the family; but if he be sincerely faithful and upright, certainly he deserveth much; so as to be reckoned as one of the brethren, or at least to receive a fiduciary administration of the inheritance. Lord Bacon.

Ver. 4. And a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue] *And a hearer after lies to, &c.* Houbigant renders the verse, *A wicked man will give ear to false lips, a just man will not hearken to an evil tongue.*

Ver. 8. A gift is as a precious stone, &c.] A gift is so tempting, that it can be no more refused than a precious jewel by him to whom it is presented, if he be not under the influences of Divine grace, and the bribe come up to his price. Such is its power in those cases, that it too often prevails, dispatches business, carries causes, and, in a word, effects whatever a man desires: But O, how detestable a practice in the sight of a just God! See chap. xviii. 18. and Bishop Patrick.

Ver. 11. An evil man, &c.] Houbigant renders it, *A cruel man will seek only for evil; and therefore a most cruel messenger shall be sent to him.*

Ver. 12. Let a bear robbed, &c.] Bochart observes four things concerning the bear: the first every one knows, that the bear is an exceedingly fierce creature; the second, that the female is more fierce than the male; the third, that she is more fierce than ordinary when she has whelps; and lastly, when she is robbed of them, she is fiercest of all.

14 The beginning of strife *is as* when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with.

15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both *are* abomination to the LORD.

16 Wherefore *is there* a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing *he hath* no heart to it?

17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, *and* becometh surety in the presence of his friend.

19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: *and* he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.

20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.

21 He that beggetteth a fool *doeth it* to his sorrow; and the father of a fool hath no joy.

22 A merry heart doeth good *like* a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

23 A wicked *man* taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.

24 Wisdom *is* before him that hath understanding: but the eyes of a fool *are* in the ends of the earth.

25 A foolish son *is* a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.

26 Also to punish the just *is* not good, *nor* to strike princes for equity.

all. See 2 Sam. xvii. 8. Hosea xiii. 8. and Bochart de Animal. Sacr. lib. iii. cap. 9.

Ver. 14. *The beginning of strife, &c.*] Those who begin a quarrel are like those who make a breach in a bank, and give an opening to the waters of a rapid river; which they can never be sure to stop before it produces the most fatal and calamitous events. This painting admirably represents the effects of lying and false reports, and supplies us with an excellent lesson to avoid the contagion, and prevent the beginnings of contention. See Calmet and Poole.

Ver. 16. *Wherefore is there a price, &c.*] *What would it profit a fool to have that wherewith he might purchase wisdom, whilst he hath no heart?* Houb. No discretion to discern the worth of wisdom, no desire to gain it, no understanding to use it properly?

Ver. 17. *A friend loveth at all times, &c.*] This may be rendered; *A friend loveth at all times; but he is a brother in the day of adversity.* A good friend on certain occasions is better, and will do more, than a brother or a parent. See chap. xviii. 24. We may read, *And becomes a brother in adversity.*

Ver. 19. *He that exalteth his gate*] Among other violences of the Arabs, that of riding into the houses of those whom they mean to harass, is not one of the least observable; the rather, as it seems to be referred to in the Scriptures. To prevent this insult, and the mischief which these Arabs might do them, Thevenot tells us, that the door of the house in which the French merchants lived at Rama was not three feet high; and that all the doors of that town are equally low, to hinder the Arabs from entering their houses on horseback; and he afterwards speaks of a large door going into the church at Bethlehem, which has been walled up, and only a *wickel* left in it three feet high, and two wide, to hinder the Arabs from entering the church with their horses. Other authors have made the like observation. Now may not the present passage refer to this, *He that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction, or calamity?* The royal preacher elsewhere saith, *Pride goeth before destruction,*

a haughty spirit before a fall; and again, *Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility;* texts which seem to contain the same thought in general with that before us. If then he thought fit to come to particulars, why is the *height of the gate* of a haughty person mentioned, rather than other circumstances of magnificence in a building? rather than the wideness of the house, the airiness of the rooms, the cutting out of windows, the cedar cielings, and the vermillion, which are all mentioned by Jeremiah as pieces of grandeur? It can hardly be imagined, that Solomon mentioned the stateliness of the gateway of a house without a particular meaning; but if bands of Arabs had taken the advantage of large doors to enter into houses which stood in the confines of Solomon's kingdom, or of neighbouring countries with which the Jews were well acquainted, there is a most graceful vivacity in the Apophthegm. See Obierv. p. 56.

Ver. 22. *A merry heart doeth good like a medicine*] Dr. Grey renders this verse thus, *A merry heart doeth good to the body, or flesh; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.* We often meet with this opposition, and the sense perhaps is more complete, especially if we leave out the word *like*, which is not in the Hebrew. Houbigant translates it nearly in the same manner.

Ver. 24. *The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth*] As a wise man's understanding appears in his very countenance, and a fool is known by his garish and wandering eyes; so the one has his wisdom always present, and ready at hand to guide and govern him, when the other knows not what to follow; but his thoughts are roving up and down to no purpose, though he ramble to the very ends of the earth. See Patrick and Calmet. Houbigant renders the verse, *Wisdom hath her seat in the countenance of the prudent: folly swells in the eyes of the fool; or, the eyes of the foolish swell with folly.*

Ver. 26. *Also to punish the just, &c.*] *It is not right to oppress the just; not even when the prince hath declined from equity:* Houb.; who observes, that Solomon means to say, "It is dangerous to oppress the just, even when unjust

27 He that hath knowledge spareth his words; *and* a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.

28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: *and* he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

CHAP. XVIII.

THROUGH desire a man having separated himself seeketh *and* intermeddeth with all wisdom.

2 A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.

3 When the wicked cometh, *then* cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach.

4 The words of a man's mouth *are* as deep waters, *and* the well-spring of wisdom *as* a flowing brook.

5 *It is* not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

6 A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.

7 A fool's mouth *is* his destruction, and his lips *are* the snare of his soul.

8 The words of a talebearer *are* as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

10 The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

11 The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.

12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour *is* humility.

13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth *it*, *it is* folly and shame unto him.

14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.

16 A man's gift maketh room for him, and

“princes favour oppressors.” See Chap. xviii. 5. Schultens renders it, *Also to punish the just is not good; it is to strike the ingenuous for their equity.* According to the common interpretation, Solomon condemns here the temerity of those who do injury to the just, and who attack the prince, the magistrate, the judge, because they are too exact and equitable in the exercise of justice.

Ver. 27. Is of an excellent spirit] Or, *will be cool in his temper. He who hath prudence moderates his spirit.* Houbigant.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1, 2. Through desire, &c.] The opinions of commentators on these two verses are much divided. Houbigant renders them as follows: *He who prepares dissention seizes all occasions: he leaves nothing untried: ver. 2. A fool loveth not to be ruled by counsel, but to be carried on rashly and turbulently.* Another reads, *A hair-brained man followeth fancy, and intermeddeth in every thing: ver. 2. A fool hath no delight in understanding, but in ravings, or ramblings of his heart.* If we understand the text in a bad sense, it may be paraphrased thus: “An inconstant man desires many things, and seeks satisfaction; but whatsoever he seeks he never meets with; but is defeated and disappointed in all his designs: ver. 2. And this is a certain character of a fool; that he never fixes on any thing; but chooseth to wander up and down, and rove from one inquiry to another, rather than give his mind to true wisdom and prudence, in which he hath no pleasure.” If we take

the words in a good sense, they may be thus paraphrased, “He who lives retired, and sequesters himself from all company and business, out of a true affection to wisdom, endeavours to have a sound knowledge and understanding of things: ver. 2. But a vain man addicteth himself to study for no other end, than to boast himself in a show of wisdom which he doth not love.” See Bishop Patrick.

Ver. 3. When the wicked cometh, &c.] *When the wicked entereth, contempt entereth with him; and with a reproachful man, reproach.* See Schultens. Instead of *ignominy*, we may read, *turpitude, scandalous behaviour.*

Ver. 5. To accept the person, &c.] This phrase has principally, if not always, a judicial meaning. See Levit. xix. 15. Deut. i. 17. xvi. 19. The propriety of the expression will appear, when we find that it is applied to such qualifications as have no relation to the cause; namely, riches, friendship, or family connections. These are visible like the face of one man to another: but the merits of the cause are not apparent till investigated. See Grotius, and Foster's Sermons, vol. iii. p. 12.

Ver. 8. The words, &c.] *The words of a rancorous person are like morsels greedily swallowed; they sink into the lower parts of the belly.* Schultens, see his note. Houbigant renders it, *The words of a talebearer are indeed smooth and soft; but they afterwards go down, &c.*

Ver. 12. Before destruction, &c.] *Before destruction a man is haughty, as before honour he is modest, or humble.* Houbigant.

Ver. 14. Who can bear?] Or, *Who can raise it up?*

bringeth him before great men.

17 *He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.*

18 The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.

19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and *their contentions are like the bars of a castle.*

20 A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

22 *Who so findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.*

23 The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.

24 A man *that hath friends must shew himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

C H A P. XIX.

BETTER is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than *he that is perverse in*

his lips, and is a fool.

2 Also *that the soul be without knowledge it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.*

3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD.

4 Wealth maketh many friends: but the poor is separated from his neighbour.

5 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and *he that speaketh lies shall not escape.*

6 Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.

7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth *them with words, yet they are wanting to him.*

8 He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good.

9 A false witness shall not be unpunished: and *he that speaketh lies shall perish.*

10 Delight is not seemly for a fool: much less for a servant to have rule over princes.

11 The discretion of a man deferreth his

Ver. 17. He that is first in his own cause] "He that speaks first in any cause will undoubtedly set his side in the most favourable and most plausible light; but when the defendant replies, all his arguments will be brought to the test, and all his sophisms laid open and confuted." This and the following proverbs relate to judicial proceedings. See Grotius and Calmet.

Ver. 19. A brother offended] As a fortified city is a brother assisted by a brother; and they who mutually love one another, are like the bars of a castle. Houb. following the Vulgate. The author of the Observations, remarking that these bars were frequently of brass or iron, says, "According to this, there may be something more in the emphasis of the following passage than has been remarked. Their contentions are like the bars of a castle; not merely hard to be removed, on account of their size, but on account of the materials of which they were made; as not being of wood, but of iron or brass." See 1 Kings, iv. 13. Isai. xiv. 2.

Ver. 22. Who so findeth a wife findeth a good thing] He who findeth a good wife, findeth a good thing. Houbigant, after many of the versions. See chap. xix. 14. The LXX and Vulgate read at the end of this verse, *He that putteth away a good wife putteth away a good thing, but he who retains an adulteress is foolish and wicked.*

C H A P. XIX.

Ver. 1. Better is the poor, &c.] Better is a poor man who

is upright in his way, than a rich man who is perverse in his path. Houbigant. Thus preserving the antithesis, and following the Syriac.

Ver. 2. Also, that the soul be, &c.] The Chaldee renders this, *He that knoweth not his soul, it is not good for him; he that hasteth with his feet into evil is a sinner.* Solomon in this verse, says Bishop Patrick, observes two great springs of all our miscarriages; want of understanding, and want of deliberation. To make too much haste in a business is the way not to succeed; and to run blindly upon any thing is no less prejudicial to us in our undertakings. Both he that effects things without knowledge, and he that pursues what he undertakes without deliberation, runs into many mistakes, and commits many sins: for which the wise man shews in the next verse they must blame none but themselves; and never reflect upon God, as if he were negligent of them or hard to them; which men are prone to think when they have foolishly undone themselves.

Ver. 7. He pursueth them with words] Most interpretations of this verse seem forced and unnatural; I think Le Clerc's the best, says Dr. Grey, which applies the phrase to *pursue with words*, to him that seeks after those friends who fly from him, and were only nominal friends. Thus, Hosea, xii. 1. to *pursue or follow after the east wind*, is to grasp at vanities or bubbles; or at least the meaning is, that a poor man who is destitute of friends hath nothing left but mere words or professions. But it appears plainly from

anger; and *it is* his glory to pass over a transgression.

12 The king's wrath *is* as the roaring of a lion; but his favour *is* as dew upon the grass.

13 A foolish son is the calamity of his father; and the contentions of a wife *are* a continual dropping.

14 House and riches *are* the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife *is* from the LORD.

15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

16 He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; *but* he that despiseth his ways shall die.

17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth

unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

19 A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver *him*, yet thou must do it again.

20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

21 *There are* many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

22 The desire of a man *is* his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar?

23 The fear of the LORD *tendeth* to life: and *he that bath it* shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

from the LXX that this verse does not belong to the two former: for they read, "Every one that hateth a poor brother is far from friendship: a good understanding approaches those who know it; but a prudent man shall find it. He that doeth much evil perfecteth wickedness; but he that contendeth words, [λογας, perhaps λογους, *with words*] shall not be safe." One whole period, and the first part of another seem to be lost in the Hebrew, part of the last line of the LXX seems to be a translation of the Hebrew, which we render, *He pursueth him with words*. See Grey, p. 192. Houbigant renders this verse, *All his own brethren hate a poor man; how much more his neighbour? They have departed far from him; he followeth after them, but they are not found*. Schultens renders the last words of the verse, *which are, or signify nothing*.

Ver. 13. *The contentions of a wife, &c.*] The author of the *Observations* remarks, that it is no wonder the easterns sleep on the tops of houses only in summer, since, however agreeable their arbours and wicker-work closets may be in the dry part of the year, they must be very disagreeable in the wet, and they that should then lodge in them, would be exposed to a *continual dropping*. To be limited consequently to such a place, and to have no other apartment to live in, must be very incommoding. To such circumstances then, probably, it is that Solomon alludes, when he saith, *It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house*; (chap. xxi. 9. and xxv. 24.) *a corner*, covered with boughs or rushes, and made into a little harbour, in which they used to sleep, in summer, but which must have been a very incommodious place, to have made an intire dwelling. To the same allusion belong those other expressions, that speak of the *contentions of a wife being like a continual dropping*; as in the present passage, and chap. xxvii. 15. Put together, they amount to this: "It is better to have no other habitation than an *arbour* on the house-top, and be there exposed to the wet of winter, which is oftentimes of several days continuance, than to dwell in a wide and commodious house with a

"brawling woman; for her contentions are a continual dropping; and, wide as the house may be, you will not be able to avoid them, and get out of their reach." Nor will it be any objection to this observation, if it should be affirmed, that the boughs and wicker-work closets are not made as the corners of their parapet-walls, but on the middle of their roofs, as very probable they are, the better to receive the fresh air; since the word פּינָחַב *pinnab*, translated *corner*, does not only signify a place where two walls join, but a *tower* also; as appears from Zeph. i. 16. and consequently may import such a sort of arbour, as well as one formed by means of two joining walls.

Ver. 18. *And let not, &c.*] *But suffer not thyself to be transported to cause him to die*. The LXX read, *Chasten thy son, so shall he be hopeful; but be not raised in thy wrath to the provocation of him*. See Coloss. iii. 21.

Ver. 22. *The desire of a man is his kindness*] This will admit of several interpretations. The LXX read, *Almsgiving, or charity, bringeth fruit to a man; and a poor just man is better than a rich man who is a liar*. Le Clerc gives this meaning of the first clause, That there is no virtue which a man should labour after more than beneficence, as it is the greatest ornament of human nature, and the bond of society. But if we consider it as connected with the verse following, the most natural construction seems to be this, "A man shews his kindness by his will or desire to do good; and in this respect a poor man, who would be beneficent if he could, is better than a liar; i. e. a rich man who makes a profession of kindness, but does not perform it." The Syriac reads, *A poor man is better than a deceitful rich one*. See Grey.

Ver. 23. *The fear of the Lord tendeth to life*] *The fear of the Lord tendeth to life; he who is filled with it shall sleep, or pass his nights free from all evil*. Houbigant. Schultens, whom Dr. Grey follows, renders it, *The fear of Jehovah indeed is life; but he who sleeps in carnal security shall not be free from evil*. See Deut. xxxii. 15. The LXX read, *The fear of the Lord is to a man's life; but he that is without fears, namely,*

24 A slothful *man* hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

25 Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.

26 He that wasteth *his* father and chafeth away *his* mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

28 An ungodly witness scorneth judgment; and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.

29 Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.

CHAP. XX.

WINE is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

namely, of God, shall abide in places where there is no knowledge to govern him; that is, shall run blindly into all manner of mischief.

Ver. 24. *A slothful man*] This verse contains a most elegant but hyperbolic description of a man who has given himself up to sloth; who refuses to do things as easy pulling his hand out of his bosom, and as necessary as eating and drinking. See Psal. lxxiv. 11.

Ver. 27. *Cease, my son, &c.*] *My son, that thou mayest hear instruction, cease to wander from the discourses of wisdom.* Houbigant. Bishop Patrick's paraphrase of the verse runs thus, "My son, beware of their discourse, who, under the shew of greater learning, seduce thee from the plain doctrine of virtue [and holiness]; or, if thou hast been unhappily engaged in such company, quit it presently and continue with those who honestly instruct thee. For remember this, to leave off hearing the instruction of good men is the first step towards a departure from all religion."

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *Strong drink is raging*] The first precept in this chapter is against drunkenness, as an enemy to wisdom even in common things, much more in those of everlasting concernment; for that commonly expels out of men's minds all reverence both to God and to others; inclining them to say or do any thing without restraint or discretion. And what unruly passions it excites when the brain is disturbed with it, is universally known. The word *המיה* *homeh*, here translated *raging*, includes them all: it signifies that discomposed, unquiet, and restless state of mind, which

2 The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: *whoso* provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.

3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

4 The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

5 Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find.

7 The just *man* walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.

8 A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.

9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

10 Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.

expresses itself in wild and tumultuous motions. See Bishop Patrick and Schultens.

Ver. 2. *The fear of a king, &c.*] Or, *The terror of a king is as the roaring of a young lion: he who rageth against him, sinneth, &c.* Houbigant renders it, *The threatening of a king.*

Ver. 5. *Counsel in the heart of man, &c.*] There is hardly any thing but may be compassed by wisdom: for though the designs and intentions of another man, especially one who has a deep understanding, are as hard to be sounded as waters which lie in the secret caverns of the earth; yet there are persons of such penetration, that they will find means to discover them, and draw them out. Lord Bacon observes, that there are six ways whereby the knowledge of men may be drawn out and disclosed; by their faces and countenances, by words, by deeds, by their nature, by their ends, and by the relations of others. See Adv. of Learn. book viii. chap. 2.

Ver. 6. *Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness*] "Most men are ready enough to claim to themselves a large share of virtue and piety; but where is the man of true and undissembled virtue and holiness, who studies rather to be than to seem good?" See Schultens.

Ver. 8. *A king, &c.*] The wise man excites monarchs to hear causes in person, as the best means of preventing abuses, and acquiring a true state of their nation. Agreeably to this, we find Herodotus asserting, that kings were originally constituted for this very purpose. This also was Cicero's opinion, and was long before asserted by Hesiod. See Grotius and Calmet.

Ver. 9. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean*] *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, says St. John. But here is our comfort, If we confess*

11 Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work *be* pure, and whether *it be* right.

12 The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.

13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty: open thine eyes, *and* thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

14 *It is* naught, *it is* naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.

15 There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge *are* a precious jewel.

16 Take his garment that is surety *for* a stranger; and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

17 Bread of deceit *is* sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.

18 *Every* purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.

19 He that goeth about *as* a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

21 An inheritance *may be* gotten hastily at

the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.

22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; *but* wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

23 Divers weights *are* an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance *is* not good.

24 Man's goings *are* of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

25 *It is* a snare to the man *who* devoureth *that which is* holy, and after vows to make inquiry.

26 A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.

27 The spirit of man *is* the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

28 Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy.

29 The glory of young men *is* their strength: and the beauty of old men *is* the grey head.

30 The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so *do* stripes the inward parts of the belly.

C H A P. XXI.

THE king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD; *as* the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will.

confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Though I be nothing, says St. Paul, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. yet I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Phil. iv. 13.

Ver. 16. And take a pledge of him for a strange woman] And pawn him to foreigners.

Ver. 17. Bread of deceit] Bread gained by fraud. Houbigant.

Ver. 25. It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy] It is a snare to a man, if he swallow down a vow, or an oath. Or, as Houbigant renders it, The man is ensnared who rashly vows a holy thing, and shall delay, retracting his vow. The verse is generally understood to be directed against sacrilege.

Ver. 26. A wise king scattereth the wicked] The plain meaning seems to be, that a good king separates the bad from the good by a due execution of his laws; which is like the winnowing the corn after the chaff is separated from it, by drawing the wheel over it. See Isai. xxviii. 27, 28. and Fuller's Miscellanies, book vi. chap. 12.

Ver. 27. The spirit of man.] The soul of man is as a burning lamp, which God hath kindled in the midst of us, which enlightens us, and discovers to us all that passes; it is that breath of life which the Lord hath breathed into

us. Lord Bacon refers the latter part of this verse to the inquisitive search of man's mind into all kinds of things; for though the wise man says in Eccles. iii. that it is impossible for man to find out all the works of God; yet this doth not derogate from the capacity of man's mind; but may be referred to the impediments of knowledge (such as the shortness of life, disputations among learned men, and refusals to unite their studies and labours; unfaithful and depraved tradition of sciences: with many other inconveniences, wherewith this present state is surrounded): For, that no parcel of the world is denied to man's inquiry or invention, he declares in another place, where he saith, *The spirit of man is as the lamp of God, wherewith he searcheth into the inwards of all secrets.* See Adv. of Learning, as above.

*Ver. 30. The blueness of a wound] This is a very obscure passage. I think, says Dr. Grey, Le Clerc's interpretation the best I have met with; that a wicked man, who has received due correction for his crimes, will be cured of them, or will not so easily fall into the like again; and that though stripes chiefly affect the body, yet they have likewise an effect on (the chambers of the belly) the inward recesses of the mind; restraining the offender by the fear of punishment. That this is the meaning of the Hebrew words כַּדְרֵי בָטֵן *chadrei batan*, rendered *The chambers**

2 Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

3 To do justice and judgment *is* more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

4 An high look, and a proud heart, *and* the ploughing of the wicked *is* sin.

5 The thoughts of the diligent *tend* only to presentousness; but of every one *that is* hasty only to want.

6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue *is* a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

7 The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment.

8 The way of man *is* froward and strange: but *as for* the pure, his work *is* right.

9 *It is* better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a

wide house.

10 The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.

11 When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.

12 The righteous *man* wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for *their* wickedness.

13 Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

14 A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom, strong wrath.

15 *It is* joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction *shall be* to the workers of iniquity.

16 The man that wandereth out of the way

bers of the belly, appears from that elegant comparison of the conscience, or spirit of a man, ver. 27. to a light within him, searching out and discovering his most secret thoughts.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord] The author of the *Observations* informs us, that in Judea their watering canals are artificially divided into several small streams, which render the country exceedingly fruitful. To these canals, and the fertility produced by them, says he, I imagine Solomon refers in this verse, *The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, or as watering canals; he turneth it whithersoever he will*. Commentators suppose, that this marks out the power of the great Lord of lords over the hearts of princes. It does so, undoubtedly; but, though they have given us the thought in general, I do not remember to have met with any who have given us the energy of it, which seems to be this: "Which way soever the heart of the king turneth, it conveys riches, just as a watering-canal doth plenty; and let it be remembered, that the Lord turns it whithersoever he will, and makes whom he pleases the favourites of princes." Northern readers have often, I dare say, wondered in themselves, that the divine energy upon the minds of men, which is apparently intended by the words, should be represented by man's turning a stream of water whither he pleases, which appears to him a work of difficulty; such difficulty, that it is not often attempted in this country. He therefore is apt to be surprized that some allusion, conveying the idea of greater ease, was not made use of. However, to an oriental imagination, the metaphor will appear strong, but in all respects just, as conveying the thought of that ease with which the power of God operates on the hearts of princes, and of the enriching effects of royal favour (which is elsewhere compared to a cloud of the latter rain); adding further prosperity to those who are in affluent circumstances, and setting beggars among

princes; just like those canals which are so common in these countries, which add very much to the fertility of a rich soil, and sometimes turn a desert into a paradise. Thus the province of Faoumé, or Fioum, the richest in all Egypt, owes all its fertility, according to Maillet, to a canal made by art in very ancient times, and would without it have been absolutely barren, as the want of keeping this canal with sufficient care has very much injured it.

Ver. 4. And the ploughing of the wicked] Dr. Grey is for taking the two parts of the verse separately, thus, "A lofty look and a proud heart go generally together; i. e. the countenance shews the disposition of the mind, the lamp of the wicked is sin." *The lamp* seems to signify that which men make the rule or guide of their actions. In this sense the law of the Lord is the lamp of the righteous, but sin is the lamp of the wicked. See chap. vi. 23. Pf. cxix. 105.

Ver. 6. The getting of treasures by a lying tongue] *He who gathers treasures by a deceitful tongue, pursues vain things. He shall be driven into the snares of death.* Houbigant.

Ver. 7. The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them] *The ruin or desolation of the wicked shall affright them (they shall be desolated, ruined, ravaged, and terrified); because they would not follow justice.*

Ver. 8. The way of man is froward and strange] The true rendering is this, *The way of the strange man is froward, but as for the pure his work is right.* Grey.

Ver. 11. When the scorner is punished] *When the scorner is punished, the humble is made more wise; when the wise man prospers, the same person will acquire knowledge.* Houbigant.

Ver. 12. The righteous] *The just [Judge] makes exact scrutiny into the house of the wicked, to bring the wicked to punishment.* Dr. Grey would read, *The righteous prospereth in his house, but wickedness overthroweth the wicked.* We have the phrase of the first hemistich, in 1 Sam. xviii. 14. and the second is almost the same as ch. xiii. 6.

Ver.

of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

17 He that loveth pleasure *shall be* a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

18 The wicked *shall be* a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.

19 *It is* better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

20 *There is* a treasure to be desired, and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

22 A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.

23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles.

24 Proud and haughty scorner *is* his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.

25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

26 He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not.

27 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* abomination: how much more, *when* he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

28 A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth, speaketh constantly.

29 A wicked man hardeneth his face: but *as for* the upright, he directeth his way.

30 *There is* no wisdom nor understanding, nor counsel against the LORD.

31 The horse *is* prepared against the day of battle: but safety *is* of the LORD.

CHAP. XXII.

A GOOD name *is* rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

2 The rich and poor meet together: the LORD *is* the maker of them all.

Ver. 16. The man that wandereth, &c.] He who deviates from the way of religion, shall remain in the congregation of the Rephaim: His lot shall be among those wicked souls hereafter; i. e. in the depths of Sheol [hell], or the lowermost or most wretched parts of it; where the lewd and dissolute go, as he hath told us, chap. ix. 18. See Peters on Job, p. 363.

Ver. 17. He that loveth wine and oil] Dr. Pococke, in describing his journey to Jerusalem, after his landing at Joppa, tells us, that he was conveyed to an encampment of Arabs, who entertained him as well as they could, making him cakes, and bringing him fine oil, in which they usually dip their bread. When he says usually, he means, I presume, when they are more elegantly regaled; for the eastern people often make use of bread with nothing more than salt, or some such trifling addition, such as summer favory, dried and powdered, which, mixed with salt, is eaten by many of the people of Aleppo as a seasoning to their bread, according to the account of Dr. Russell. The Septuagint translation of Job vi. 6. seems to refer to the same practice, when it renders the first part of that verse, Will bread be eaten without salt? It is to the same sort of frugality also, I suppose, that Solomon refers, when he says in the present verse, He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich. One would have thought the oil with their bread, which answers to our bread and butter, should not have been thought extravagant; but the account given by Dr. Russell shews that it is a piece of delicacy in the east, the expence of which they frequently avoid. See Observations, p. 128.

Ver. 20. There is a treasure, &c.] Desirable treasure and oil are in the dwelling, &c. Houbigant renders the last

clause, *But a foolish man will dissipate these: and Schultens, But a foolish man, or a man given to luxury or extravagance, absorbs it; i. e. all that desirable treasure and opulence which his wife and careful father had abundantly laid up.*

Ver. 21. Findeth life, righteousness, and honour] Shall find life and glory. Houbigant.

Ver. 24. Proud and haughty scorner] As to the proud and haughty, or arrogant, scorner is his name, dealing in proud wrath. Houbigant reads, He who is proud and contemptuous, is called a scorner. He behaves himself fiercely and arrogantly.

Ver. 26. He coveteth greedily] Though he in this verse may refer to the slothful in the preceding one; yet the LXX, who are followed by several other versions, read, The wicked coveteth. Schultens renders it, Concupiscence, or the covetous man, coveteth; omni die concupiscit cupiditas.

Ver. 28. But the man that heareth] Dr. Grey would render this, But an obedient or good man will be careful of what he speaks. Houbigant has it, He who hearkeneth to justice shall be victorious in his cause.

Ver. 31. The horse is prepared against the day of battle] Solomon mentions the horse, instead of all warlike preparations, because it was the chief, and all nations placed much of their confidence in the number and strength of their horses. Indeed horses were then used chiefly for war. See Calmet.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 2. The rich and poor meet together] The world does not consist all of rich, nor all of poor; but they are mixed

3 A prudent *man* foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

4 By humility *and* the fear of the LORD, are riches, and honour, and life.

5 Thorns *and* snares *are* in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

6 Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower *is* servant to the lender.

8 He that soweth iniquity, shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be

blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

11 He that loveth pureness of heart, *for* the grace of his lips the king *shall be* his friend.

12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.

13 The slothful *man* saith, *There is* a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

14 The mouth of strange women *is* a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.

mixed together, and have need one of another, and will properly harmonise if they consider that there is one Lord who is the creator of both, who hath by his providence ordered this inequality for their mutual good, and who is no respecter of persons.

Ver. 4. By humility and the fear of the Lord] The reward of meekness, which is the fear of the Lord, is wealth, &c. Schultens. Houbigant renders it, *The rewards of modesty and the fear of the Lord, are, &c.* Or it may be rendered, *The fruit of humility, &c.*

Ver. 6. Train up a child] Initiate, instruct, catechise; lay down the first rudiments. Houbigant. Horace says remarkably, (considering him as under the Heathen dispensation,)

—— *Nunc adhibe puro, &c.* Ep. ii. lib. i. ad fin.

—— Now pliantly inure
Your mind to virtue, while your heart is pure;
Now suck in wisdom; for the vessel well
With liquor season'd long retains the smell.

FRANCIS.

See Bishop Tillotson's and Dr. Doddridge's Sermons on the text.

Ver. 8. He that soweth iniquity, &c.] Houbigant renders this, He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: the rod shall disperse and dissipate his labour: and he supposes the idea to be taken from sowing and harvest. See Isai. xxviii. 27, 28. Schultens says the meaning is, that, "He who soweth iniquity, when he thinks his harvest to be come, shall himself undergo the flail or rod; by which he shall be consumed, being bruised himself who used to bruise others, and his punishment shall be complete." The LXX add to the proverb, *The Lord blesteth or loveth a cheerful giver; but will complete the vanity of his works.* See 2 Cor. ix. 7.

Ver. 11. He that loveth pureness of heart] The LXX and Arabic read, The Lord loveth pure hearts, and all those who are free from sin are acceptable to him. They who insist upon the Hebrew reading as perfect, must imagine the sense to be, "The Lord loveth purity of heart: the

"king is a friend to the grace of the lips;" i. e. Purity of heart is that alone which gives favour in the sight of God: though eloquence of speech and gracefulness of address may be sufficient to recommend a man to the favour of his prince. Houbigant renders it, *If any one loveth purity of heart, he shall feed the king with the grace of his lips: i. e.* says he, "If any one has a sincere and honest heart, he, far removed from all falsehood and flattery, shall feed with the truth kings, from whom truth in the general is banished." Bishop Patrick paraphrases it, "He who loves sincerity above all things, and is able to deliver his mind in acceptable language, is fit to be privy counsellor to a king."

*Ver. 14. The mouth of strange women is a deep pit] Maundrell, describing the passage out of the jurisdiction of the Bascha of Aleppo into that of the Bascha of Tripoli, tells us, that the road was rocky and uneven, but attended with variety. "Sometimes it led us under the cool shade of thick trees; sometimes through narrow valleys, watered with fresh murmuring torrents; and then for a good while together upon the brink of a precipice. And in all places it treated us with the prospect of plants and flowers of divers kinds, as myrtles, oleanders, cyclamens, &c. Having spent about two hours in this manner, we descended into a low valley; at the bottom of which is a fissure into the earth, of a great depth, but withal so narrow that it is not discernible to the eye, till you arrive just upon it, though to the ear a notice of it is given at a great distance, by reason of the noise of a stream running down into it from the hills. We could not guess it to be less than thirty yards deep; but it is so narrow that a small arch, not four yards over, lands you on its other side. They call it the Sheikh's Wife; a name given it from a woman of that quality, who fell into it, and, I need not add, perished." Now may not Solomon refer to some such dangerous place as this, in the present verse, *The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit, &c.* and chap. xxiii. 27. *A whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit?* The flowery pleasures of the*

15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

17 Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wife, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge:

18 For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

19 That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.

20 Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

21 That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?

22 Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:

23 For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

the place where this fatal pit was, make the allusion still more striking. How agreeable to *sense* the path which led to this *chamber of death!* See Observations, p. 219.

Ver. 15. *Foolishness is bound, &c.*] Ignorance, weakness, inclination to evil, corruption of heart, are maladies which accompany all men from their birth: education, instruction, correction, under the influence of Divine grace, cure them, or diminish very much their ill effects. Calmet. Dr. Taylor's gloss is, "How strong soever appetite may be in children, proper discipline will correct and regulate it."

Ver. 16. *He that oppresseth the poor, &c.*] *He who spoileth the poor that he may abound in riches, shall himself give to the rich, and want.* Houbigant. From this verse, there is scarcely any interpreter but has observed that another form of speech, very different from the preceding, begins and continues to the 25th chapter. From the beginning of the tenth chapter to this place, the instructions of wisdom are delivered in short sentences, and proverbs properly so called, which have seldom any connection. But now follow exhortations and precepts in the imperative mood, and those comprehended in two, three, or more verses. See Bishop Patrick and Calmet.

REFLECTIONS.—The inspired penman here changes his stile; and, as in the beginning, addresses himself to his son in a way of exhortation; and what he says to him, he says to all. Diligent attention, and heart-application, are necessary, if we would come to the knowledge of the truth, and understand *the words of the wife*; those inspired writers whom God hath employed to communicate to us his mind and will. And in order hereto, various arguments are suggested to engage our minds in the pursuit.

1. *It is a pleasant thing, if thou keep them within thee; for heart-religion only, not formality, can bring us to taste the comforts of true godliness; and they who are most faithful will be most happy, and find that joy which a stranger intermeddleth not with.*

2. *It will be highly becoming. They shall withal be fitted in thy lips, or, be ordered by thy lips; spoken so as to minister grace to the hearers, and gain their regard and reverence.*

3. Hereby our hearts will be established in faith and confidence in God; this being the blessed effect of his word, and the great end for which it was written, and is preached; and when we are enabled to trust, we shall see the great salvation of God.

4. The matter is clear, the subject infinitely important and highly excellent, designed to promote our eternal blessedness, written to convey perpetual instruction, and particularly addressed to us by name: *to thee*, reader, *even to thee*; therefore *to-day*, while it is called *to-day*, may the word of gospel-grace, sounding in thine ears, sink down into thine heart, as *an ingrafted word, able to save thy soul!*

5. The truths are certain, *not cunningly-devised fables*, but delivered by the inspiration of God; and by the perusal of them, with fervent prayer, we shall arrive at *the full assurance of understanding*; shall have an evidence of the certainty of the objects of our faith, strong as that of our being; so that not a doubt shall remain.

6. They will enable us to give an answer to every one that asketh us a reason of the hope which is in us, and out of the good treasure of our heart to communicate to them the lessons that we have been taught of God.

Ver. 20. *Have not I written to thee excellent things*] Many of the ancient versions read *threefold things*, in which they are followed by Schultens and Grotius. The Jews distinguished philosophy under three branches; morality, physics, and divinity. Solomon wrote in all these branches, as appears from 1 Kings, iv. but most of his writings are lost. This and the book of Ecclesiastes contain what he wrote in morality or ethics. His discourses on plants and animals relate to physics, and the Canticles belong to allegorical divinity. I should rather, however, understand the word according to our version; or, more properly, "Words fit for a prince to speak, and the best men in the world to hear, and therefore truly excellent." See Patrick and Calmet.

Ver. 24, 25. *Make no friendship with an angry man*] "By how much the more devoutly the laws of friendship among good men are to be observed, by so much the more it stands us upon to use all caution, even at the

26 Be not thou one of them that strike hands, *or* of them that are sureties for debts.

27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

28 Remove not the ancient land-mark, which thy fathers have set.

29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean *men*.

C H A P. XXIII.

WHEN thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what *is* before thee:

2 And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.

3 Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat.

4 Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.

5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for *riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven.

6 Eat thou not the bread of *him that bath* an evil eye; neither desire thou his dainty meats:

7 For as he thinketh in his heart so *is* he:

C H A P. XXIII.

“very first, in the prudent election of friends; and, let the dispositions and humours of our friends be what they will, so far as concerns ourselves only, they are by all means to be borne withal: but when they impose a necessity upon us to behave ourselves just as they would have us towards other men, it is a very hard and unreasonable condition of friendship. Wherefore it highly concerns us, as Solomon here admonishes, for the preservation of the peace and safety of our life, that we intermingle not our matters with men of choleric nature, and such as easily provoke or undertake quarrels and debates; for such kinds of friends will perpetually engage us in contentions and factions, so that we shall be constrained either to break off friendship, or to be wanting to our own personal safety.” Lord Bacon’s Adv. of Learn. lib. viii. chap. 2. See also Duchal’s Sermons, vol. i. ferm. xviii.

Ver. 28. Remove not the ancient land-mark] The plain meaning of this seems to be, “Be content with thy paternal estate, and endeavour not to increase it by unjust means.” See chap. xxiii. 10.

Ver. 29. Seest thou a man diligent in his business] Solomon does not merely commend industry and diligence, as some understand it; but something more, which the Hebrew word *מביר* *mabir*, plainly imports; namely, speed, swiftness, readiness, and cheerfulness in the dispatch of business; to which is required a quickness of apprehension in conceiving the fittest means, and a dexterity in the application of them; so that the business is not only done, but done speedily, and without much noise and bustle. Bishop Patrick. Houbigant, in conformity with this remark, renders it, *If any man is intelligent and quick in the dispatch of business*. Upon which Lord Bacon observes, that quickness of dispatch only in the execution of commands, of all other qualities, hath nothing in it which doth not please the minds of princes: the motions of their minds are swift, and not very patient of delay; for they imagine that they can do any thing. This only being wanting, that it be done out of hand; upon which account, above all other qualities, celerity is to them most acceptable.

Ver. 1—3. When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, &c.] There are two evils to be avoided at the tables of the great: the one is, too much talking; the other, too much eating: the wise man exhorts his disciple to avoid both the one and the other by the phrase, *put a knife to thy throat*; “Repress your appetite, and your inclination to talk.” Wine, company, and the gaiety which attends entertainments, often invite men to be too free in the use of meat and drink; and it is by these that kings frequently prove the fidelity and the secrecy of their confidants.

Monarchs, ’tis said, with many a flowing bowl,
Search through the deep recesses of his soul,
Whom for their future friendship they design;
And put him to the torture in his wine.

Hor. Ars Poet. ver. 435.

See also Ecclus. xxxi. 12—14. Schultens and some others render the second verse: *For thou wilt put a knife to thy throat, if thou art given to appetite*; i. e. “if thou dost not curb thy appetite, it will expose thee to as certain danger, as if a knife were at thy throat.” The first and third verses seem plainly to prove, that we must understand the phrase in the second as a caution against excess and intemperance.

Ver. 4. Labour not to be rich] In this admonition against covetousness, the wise man neither forbids all labour, nor a provident care, which he commends in other places; but only represents how vain it is to be over-solicitous, and to leave no thoughts or strength for any thing else: for so the first word is, *Do not weary thyself to be rich*; and in the next part of the verse he bids us desist from our own understanding: meaning thereby, either that we should not wholly trust to it, though in the use of honest means; or, that we should not follow our own inventions, contrary to divine direction. Houbigant corrects the text, and renders it, nearly after the LXX, thus: “Do not attend, or associate thyself with a rich man, when thou thyself art poor.” Archbishop Tillotson has a very lively and pleasing remark upon the next verse; “wherein (says he) the wife man expresses himself in such a manner, as if he would give us the picture of a rich man, who sits brooding

Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

8 The morsel *which* thou hast eaten, shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.

9 Speak not in the ears of a fool; for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

10 Remove not the old land-mark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless:

11 For their Redeemer *is* mighty: he shall plead their cause with thee.

12 Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.

13 Withhold not correction from the child: for *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

15 My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.

16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.

17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but *be thou* in the fear of the LORD all the day long:

18 For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

20 Be not amongst wine-bibbers; amongst riotous eaters of flesh:

21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowfiness shall clothe *a man* with rags.

22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

23 Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wife *child*, shall have joy of him.

25 Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

27 For a whore *is* a deep ditch: and a strange woman *is* a narrow pit.

28 She also lieth in wait as *for* a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.

“ brooding over his estate till it is fledged, and, having gotten wings, flies away. But the whole tenor of the gospel teaches us, that we must die to the riches of this world, and to all things here below, and be alive to God alone.”

Ver. 18. For surely there is an end] Hebrew אחרית *acherith*, a future state. This is one of the places where some have rendered *acherith* by a reward, and Le Clerc among the rest. But to limit the reward to this world, as that learned critic every where does, is to make a sort of new world of the present, rather than admit the supposition or belief of another. See Peters on Job, p. 293. Calmet observes, that nothing can afford a man greater comfort in his last moments, than the testimony of his conscience, that he has continued in the fear of the Lord, and in an entire departure from evil.

Ver. 20. Be not amongst wine-bibbers, &c.] See the note on chap. xv. 17. The wise man almost throughout this whole chapter gives his disciple precepts respecting meals. First, he tells him of the manner in which he ought to conduct himself in eating with princes; he then cautions him to avoid the table of a covetous man; not to give him entertainment, nor to receive any from him. Here he attacks another kind of feasts; namely, where several assembled together, and each paid their quota. Formerly every one brought his own plate; this is the practice still in some countries. The reasons which might have adduced the wise man to forbid his disciples these kinds of assemblies, are, *first*, the vain expence; *secondly*, the loss

of time; *thirdly*, the hazard of evil company; *fourthly*, the dangerous habits of leading a soft and indolent life; and the fear of being accustomed to wine and luxurious living. Calmet. It would be endless to descant upon this subject, upon the mischiefs and evils of intemperance, which Solomon has so finely described at the close of this chapter: it must suffice, therefore, to refer the reader to Scheuchzer on the place, and to Dean Bolton's useful Tracts on intemperance in eating and drinking. I will just remark, that from the 22d to the 29th verse the subject begun in the present verse is interrupted.

Ver. 26. My son, give me thine heart, &c.] The heart was esteemed by the ancients the seat of the affections: accordingly, Solomon may be understood as calling upon his disciple to embrace his dictates with the warmest affection, and to reduce them to practice without exception. See Dr. Chandler, and Archbishop Sharp, vol. i. p. 396.

REFLECTIONS.—The great thing that JEHOVAH, by the mouth of Solomon, requires of his children, is, *their heart*; for without this, all beside is nothing worth; and most reasonable is the demand, when his title to it is so evident: and where the heart is right with God, our ways will be directed to please him; we shall eye the path of duty to walk in it, and the leadings of his providence to improve under every dispensation, and in this way shall be preserved from all evil.

Ver. 27. A whore is a deep ditch] See the note on chap. xxii. 14.

Ver.

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright.

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 They have stricken me, *shalt thou say*, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

C H A P. XXIV.

BE not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them:

2 For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief.

3 Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established:

4 And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

5 A wise man *is* strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.

6 For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors *there is* safety.

7 Wisdom *is* too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate.

8 He that deviseth to do evil, shall be called a mischievous person.

9 The thought of foolishness *is* sin: and the scorner *is* an abomination to men.

10 *If* thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength *is* small.

11 If thou forbear to deliver *them that are* drawn unto death, and *those that are* ready to be slain;

12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider

Ver. 31. Look not thou upon the wine, &c.] Red wine is more esteemed in the east than white; and we are told in the travels of Olearius, that it is customary with the Armenian Christians in Persia, to put Brazil wood or saffron into their wine, to give it a *higher colour*, when the wine is not so red as they like; they making no account of white wine. He mentions the same thing also in another place. These accounts of their putting Brazil wood or saffron into such their wines to give them a deeper red, seem to discover an energy of the Hebrew word יִתְחַדֵּם *yithaddam*, here used, as I never saw remarked any where. It is of the conjugation called *hithpael*, which, according to grammarians denotes an action that turns upon the agent itself: it is not always, it may be accurately observed, but in this case it should seem that it ought to be, taken according to the strictness of grammar, and that it intimates the wine's *making itself redder*, by something put into it. *Look not upon the wine when it maketh itself red.* It appears indeed from Isai. lxiii. 2. that some of the wines about Judea were naturally red; but so are those wines in Persia, only more deeply tinged by art; and this colouring is apparently to make it more grateful and tempting to the eye. See the Observations, p. 191.

Ver. 32. At the last it biteth, &c.] "Remember that the pleasure will be attended at last with intolerable pains when it works like so much poison in thy veins, and casts thee into troubles as keen, and diseases as difficult to cure, as the biting of a serpent, or the stinging of a *basilisk*;" (for so the last word should be rendered.) See Bishop Patrick. Mr. Prior has thus finely expressed the ill effects of drunkenness in his poem intitled *Solomon*:

Unhappy man! whom sorrow thus and rage
To diff'rent ills alternately engage;
Who drinks, alas! but to forget; nor sees
That melancholy, sloth, severe disease,
Mem'ry confus'd, and interrupted thought,
Death's harbingers, lie latent in the draught:
And in the flow'rs that wreath the sparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiss, and pois'nous serpents roll.

Ver. 34. As he that lieth upon the top of a mast] The Vulgate renders this, *And as the sleeping pilot, having lost his helm*: but our translation, which is agreeable to the Hebrew, is by far the strongest and most expressive.

Ver. 35. They have stricken me, &c.] *They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I did not see it; they have beaten me, and I did not know them: when will it be that I shall awake, and again return to my wine?* Houbigant.

C H A P. XXIV.

Ver. 5. A wise man is strong] The LXX read, *A wise man is better than a strong one, and a man of understanding than a strong labourer.* This reading seems preferable to ours; which, however, may imply according to the original, *A wise man is better than a strong one, and a man of knowledge than he who is mighty in strength.* The following verse is connected with this, as a proof how much wisdom is preferable to strength. *For by wise counsel, &c. i. e.* "This is plainly seen in war itself, wherein success is often owing more to conduct than force." The LXX support this meaning.

Ver. 10. If thou faint, &c.] The plain meaning is, "Thou

it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth *not* he know *it?* and shall *not* he render to *every* man according to his works?

13 My son, eat thou honey, because *it is* good; and the honey-comb, *which is* sweet to thy taste:

14 So *shall* the knowledge of wisdom *be* unto thy soul: when thou hast found *it*, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

15 Lay not wait, O wicked *man*, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting-place:

16 For a just *man* falleth seven times, and riseth up *again*: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he

stumbleth.

18 Lest the LORD see *it*, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

19 Fret not thyself because of evil *men*, neither be thou envious at the wicked:

20 For there shall be no reward to the evil *man*; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

21 My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: *and* meddle not with them that are given to change:

22 For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?

23 These *things* also *belong* to the wife. *It is* not good to have respect of persons in judgment.

24 He that faith unto the wicked, Thou *art* righteous; him shall the people curse, nations

“Thou art not a man of courage, if thou canst not bear adversity with an equal mind.” Some, however, paraphrase it, “If adversity deject thee, and break thy spirit, thou wilt be so much the more unable to get out of it.”

Ver. 11. *If thou forbear, &c.*] Do not delay to deliver those who are led unto death, and who are now about to be slain. Houbigant. Or, Deliver them who are drawn unto death, and those who are ready to be slain, if thou canst prevent it. The wise man, in this and the following verse, inforces the necessity of giving our assistance towards the rescue of innocent persons when their lives are in danger, either by counselling them, or petitioning others in their behalf, or by doing any thing in our power for their deliverance. See Bishop Patrick.

Ver. 13, 14. *My son, eat thou honey, &c.*] It is well known in how high esteem honey was among the ancients for food, for drink, for medicine, for preserving of dead bodies, and particularly for infants. See Isai. vii. 15. Eccus. xxxix. 26. Hence the ancient Christians used to give a little milk and honey to those who were baptized, as persons newly regenerate and born again; because honey, as well as milk, was the nutriment of little children in those countries. See 1 Sam. xiv. 27. Luke, xxiv. 41, 42. All this may be applied to wisdom, from whence the mind derives the greatest satisfaction; and therefore it ought to be our daily diet, our sweetest refreshment, from the beginning of our days to the end of them. See Bishop Patrick.

Ver. 16. *For a just man falleth seven times*] i. e. Into trouble or affliction, not into wilful sin. The Hebrew word נָפַל *napal*, rendered *falleth*, is never applied to sin; but, when set in opposition to the word קָם *kum*, *riseth up*, implies affliction or calamity; as in Mic. vii. 8. Amos, viii. 4. Jer. xxv. 27. and Psal. xxxiv. 19, 20. These words are commonly not only in sermons, but in books, applied to the falling into sin; and that men may the more securely indulge themselves in their sins, and yet

think themselves good men, they have added something to them; for they are commonly cited thus, *A just man falleth seven times a day*; which last words are not in any translation of the Bible, much less in the original; but only in some corrupt editions of the Vulgate. The plain meaning of the text is what we have given; and therefore we must take heed of reading the Holy Scriptures so carelessly, as to turn our medicine into poison; which is the fault of those, who, from such mistakes, give way to their evil affections, and let them carry them into sin.

Ver. 21, 22. *My son fear thou the Lord, &c.*] The LXX read, *My son, fear God and the king; and be not disobedient to either of them: ver. 22. for they shall suddenly avenge the wicked; but the punishments of both of them, who shall know?* Whence it is plain, says Dr. Grey, that they read the same word in both verses, though they happened to read the wrong word in both; namely שְׁנֵיהֶם *sheneihem*, *them both*; whereas it seems evident to me, that שְׁנוֹיִם *shonaim*, *them that are given to change*, should be read in the second period as well as in the first; and then the sense will be, *Suddenly shall their calamity rise; and the destruction of changes, who knoweth?* i. e. “Who can tell the manifold miseries and mischiefs, which men of factious spirits bring upon themselves and others?” Houbigant renders the latter clause of the 22d verse, *And who can foresee the destruction by which they shall fall?* The wise man here commands us first to obey God; and then, the king, or supreme legislature and magistrates of a state, whose office it is to see the laws of God observed by the subjects, and to make such laws as are not repugnant to those of God, to punish the contumacious, and to pronounce all sentences according to the law; and, thirdly, not to intermix with factious discontented persons, who wish to disturb the established government, and by that means bring upon themselves and others swift destruction.

Ver. 23. *These things also belong to the wife*] The meaning may be, that the following proverbs were selected from the books of the wise men who lived after Solomon, to the time

shall abhor him:

25 But to them that rebuke *him* shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.

26 *Every man* shall kiss *his* lips that giveth a right answer.

27 Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.

28 Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive *not* with thy lips.

29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man accord-

ing to his work.

30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

32 Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon *it*, and received instruction.

33 *Yet* a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

34 So shall thy poverty come *as* one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

time of Hezekiah. The words at the head of this verse seem to be a new title to the proverbs which follow to chap. xxv. Such is the opinion of Calmet, Grotius, Grey, &c. But may they not signify only and simply, "These things also which follow belong to the wife, holy, and "virtuous conduct of life?"

Ver. 26. Every man shall kiss his lips, &c.] See Gen. xli. 40. in the margin of our bibles. The Egyptian translators of the LXX seem to have understood this verse in much the same sense as the passage referred to; *Lips shall kiss those things which answer right words*; "Shall kiss those writings by which a judge giveth just decisions." Solomon seems to be speaking of a dignified judge, as the preceding words lead us to suppose; for they express the effects which just or unjust judgments should have on the people: *ver. 23. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment: ver. 24. He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; i. e. He who absolveth the guilty, him shall the people curse, &c.* He that giveth a right answer then, in this verse, is apparently the description of a judge who pronounces right judgments on those causes which are brought before him to trial; and this *kissing*, agreeably to all that precedes, must refer to the people, the nation, not to the king for whom he judges. I do not, however, know whether a still more unexceptionable interpretation may not be proposed. The rescripts of authority were wont to be kissed, whether they were believed to be just or not, except in cases where persons assumed something of independence; nay, the letters of people of figure were treated after this manner by persons over whom they had no authority, and who knew not the contents of them, merely because they were letters of people of figure. It is possible, therefore, that these words may rather refer to another eastern custom which D'Arvieux gives an account of in his description of the Arabs of mount Carmel, who, when they present any petition to their Emir for a favour, offer their billets to him with their right hands, after having first *kissed the papers*. The Hebrew manner of expression is short, and proverbs have a peculiar shortness; *Every lip shall kiss, one maketh to return a right answer*; that is, "Every one shall be ready to present the state of his case, *kissing it as he delivers it*, when there is a judge whose decisions are cele-

brated for their being equitable. So another of these apothegms of Solomon is delivered with something of the like turn of expression. *A crown of glory the hoary head, in the way of righteousness it shall be found*; that is, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, when it is found in the way of "righteousness." See the *Observations*, p. 259.

Ver. 27. Prepare thy work without, &c.] He must begin to labour in his field, and perform the works without doors, before he builds his house: he must have wherewith to subsist, before he thinks of a commodious lodging: he must deliberate long, and reflect much, before he begins to build; but there must be no deliberation in point of sowing or tilling the ground: *Ædificare diu cogitare oportet*, (says Cato, de Re Rustic. cap. iii.) *conferere cogitare non oportet, sed facere oportet*. Our Saviour in the Gospel, Luke xiv. 28. requires him who thinks of building a tower to sit down first, and reckon with himself whether he has wherewith to go through with his undertaking, for fear of leaving his work imperfect, after having laid the foundations. In the moral sense, it is easy to make the application of this field, which must be cultivated before the building of a house, to the exercise of solid and interior graces and virtues, to a serious and profound study of the truths of religion, before the setting up to instruct or direct one's neighbour. A man must be a good labourer before he becomes an architect in the house of God. Some take the phrase to signify the engaging in marriage. "Begin with cultivating your lands, and you will be enabled to feed your family; and after this, if you will, you may think of marrying." See Calmet.

Ver. 31. Grown over with thorns] We know very few of the *thorns* which are mentioned in Scripture. The *onnis spinosa*, or *rest-barrow*, that most pernicious and prickly plant, covers whole fields and plains in Egypt and Palestine. I make no doubt but this is referred to in some parts of the Holy Scripture; and shall leave it to the philologists to determine which of the thorns here mentioned it is. The Arabs at present in Egypt call it *akol*. This is perhaps that which Moses means when he curses the earth: it grows in great plenty promiscuously with the large thistles, in the uncultivated parts of Egypt. See Hasselquist's Travels, p. 289.

CHAP. XXV.

Observations about kings, and about avoiding of quarrels, and sundry causes thereof.

TH E S E are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.

2 *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing : but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.*

3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings *is* unsearchable.

4 Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.

5 Take away the wicked *from* before the king, and his throne shall be established in

righteousness.

6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men :

7 For better *it is* that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

8 Go not forth hastily to strive, lest *thou know not* what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

9 Debate thy cause with thy neighbour *himself*; and discover not a secret to another :

10 Lest he that heareth *it* put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.

11 A word fitly spoken *is like* apples of gold in pictures of silver.

REFLECTIONS.—The observations and reflections which this wise king makes, are daily verified.

1. In worldly affairs, sloth and poverty are almost inseparably connected. See the picture of a negligent husbandman; he sleeps when others wake; his field, uncultivated, is covered with weeds, the hedge broken down, no revenue arising to the owner; and, as the necessary consequence of his neglect, want and wretchedness seize him as an armed man. And this will be the case in every trade and business with those, who, instead of diligence and activity, leave their affairs at random, live careless and negligent, expose themselves, and necessarily rush on their ruin. When such objects strike us, we must stay and pause, and learn wisdom by the reflections that we make on their folly.

2. In our spiritual concerns, the same observations hold good. The soul of the careless sinner is like this field of the slothful, over-run with the rank weeds of corrupt and vile affections; open to the inroads of every temptation; no fruit produced to God's glory, or his own comfort: yet, secure he sleeps on in the devil's arms, and cares not to be disturbed in his fatal dream: till, seized at last by death, and brought to a throne of judgment, too late he discovers his miserable condition, and receives the doom of the slothful in the place of torment. Such negligence in others should quicken our diligence, to break up the fallow ground of our hearts, to root out the thorns and nettles of corrupt desires, which are natives of the soil, to guard against the entry of temptation; and, watching unto prayer, daily to be working out our own salvation, and bringing forth those fruits of faith and holiness, whereby ourselves may be enriched, and which, through Jesus Christ, are to the praise and glory of God.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1. These are also proverbs of Solomon] To what has been said in the introduction to this book, may be added with great profit to the reader, Bishop Lowth's 24th Prelection. By the men of Hezekiah, most probably are meant

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Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah, (See 2 Kings xviii. 26.) who copied out or selected these proverbs.

Ver. 2. To conceal a thing] That is, according to Grætius, *His purposes and nature*; whereas it is the honour of a king to examine into and make himself acquainted with the state, actions, and designs of his subjects. Houbigant renders it, *he who conceals a thing honours God; he who honours the king will search it out*; but he does not attempt to give any explanation.

Ver. 3. The heaven for height] “ It is almost as impossible for the generality of minds to penetrate into the secrets of state, and understand the counsels and designs of intelligent princes, and the various ways and means whereby they consult to effect their ends, as it is to know how far it is from hence to the highest heavens; or how far to the centre of the earth upon which we tread.” See Lord Bacon's *Advanc. of Learn.* book viii. chap. 2.

Ver. 7. Whom thine eyes have seen] Houbigant closes this verse with the words, *in the presence of the prince*, and reads the 8th verse thus, *Be not hasty in pleading thy cause, to divulge what thine eyes have seen; lest in the end thou knowest not what to do, when thy neighbour shall have confuted thee.* The Vulgate renders it somewhat similar, *Do not hastily produce, in a quarrel, what thine eyes have seen: lest afterwards thou be not able to recal it, when thou hast disgraced thy friend.* The two next verses seem to countenance this interpretation.

Ver. 11. A word fitly spoken, &c.] The author of the *Observations* seems to have proved, that not apples but citrons are here meant, which were of the colour of gold; See Cantic. ii. 3. And he thinks that Solomon here refers to the manner of serving up these citrons in his court, when he says, *A word fitly spoken is like this fruit served up in vessels of silver, curiously wrought*: whether, as Maimonides supposed, wrought with open-work like baskets, or curiously chased, it no way concerns us to determine. But it may not be improper to observe, that this magnificence was not, we have reason to suppose, very common at that time, since the fruit which was presented to D'Arvieux by the grand

3 C

Emir

12 *As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprovcr upon an obedient ear.*

13 *As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.*

14 *Who so boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain.*

15 *By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.*

16 *Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.*

17 *Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's*

house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.

18 *A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour, is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.*

19 *Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble, is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint.*

20 *As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre; so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.*

21 *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:*

22 *For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.*

Emir of the Arabs was brought in nothing better than a painted vessel of wood. To an antique apparatus of vessels for fruit, perhaps of this painted wooden kind, Solomon opposes the magnificence of his court. *Observations*, p. 202. Bishop Lowth observes, that Solomon in this sentence gives us not only an apt description of the proverb or parable, but also an example of the thing described: *A word produced in its season, is like golden apples in net-work of silver; whereby he means that weighty and hidden meanings are as much commended by a terse, concise, and well-turned speech, as apples, exquisite for their colour, appear more lovely and pleasing when they shine through the network of a silver basket, exquisitely chased.* See his 24th Lecture.

Ver. 13. As the cold of snow] It was customary in the east to cool their liquors with snow; to which Solomon here most probably refers; for we cannot conceive that he could speak of a fall of snow in the time of harvest; that must have been incommoding, instead of pleasurable and refreshing, which the proverb here supposes it to be. But, though the gratefulness of liquors cooled by snow is, I apprehend, referred to; yet I very much question whether the supposition of those commentators be just, who imagine that those liquors were drank by the reapers: all that Solomon teaches us is, that the coolness given by snow to liquids was extremely grateful in the time of harvest; i. e. in the summer: but as to the reapers themselves, *vinegar*, mentioned in the book of Ruth as part of the provision for them, seems to be a much more suitable thing for persons heated with such strong exercise, than liquors cooled by snow. See *Observations*, p. 197.

Ver. 14. Who so boasteth himself of a false gift] Or, pretends he will give a valuable gift, and disappoints the expectation, *is like clouds and wind without rain.* See 1 Kings xviii. 45.

Ver. 16. Hast thou found honey?] See the 27th verse which may be rendered, "As it is not good or sweet to eat much honey; so neither to hunt for glory is glory to those who hunt after it." The meaning of the verse is this, "Moderation is good in all things, especially in those which are most pleasing to us: as honey, moderately taken, strengthens the body and prolongs life;

"but too much of it disturbs the stomach, and turns the pleasure into pain." Horace has a sentence much to the same purpose:

Sperne voluptates; nocet empti dolore voluptas.
Spurn pleasures; dear is pleasure bought with pain.

After all, the genuine christian knows, by happy experience, that there is no true pleasure except in the enjoyment of God. There are some commentators who connect this verse with the next, which they think explanatory of it.

Ver. 19, 20. Confidence in an unfaithful man] Houbigant renders this verse, *As a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint, is the protection of a wicked man in calamity; he will even take away the garment in cold weather; ver. 20. As he who sprinkles nitre with vinegar, is the man who shall sing songs to a person in grief.* Vinegar remarkably irritates nitre. See Ecclus. xxii. 6. The LXX, Syr. Chald. Vulg. and Arab. render the 20th verse, *As a moth in a garment, or a worm in wood; so is heaviness in the heart of man.*

Ver. 21. If thine enemy be hungry, &c.] The plain meaning of this seems to be, "Be kind to your enemy; for that is the surest way to gain his love, and God's blessing." It is true, *coals of fire* are seldom taken in a good sense, when used metaphorically; they commonly signify punishment or vengeance; but then they are always said or supposed to be heaped up by God himself. And surely, God's heaping up coals may well be allowed to be very different from ours; for to Him vengeance belongs, but to us it belongs not. But why may not coals of fire, so necessary to the use and comfort of life, be used in a good sense too? It is certain, however, that a *coal of fire* is once so used. 2 Sam. xiv. 7. *And so they shall quench my coal of fire which is left*, i. e. "shall deprive me of my little remaining comfort." And once, the metaphor, though by a different Hebrew word, is applied to love. Cantic. viii. 6. *Love is strong as death; the coals thereof are coals of fire; which hath a most vehement flame:* and it appears evident enough from the verse following the text, as quoted by St. Paul, Rom. xii. 20. that the phrase ought to be understood in a good sense; for he subjoins, *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* "Overcome evil with good," evidently explains heaping coals of fire upon an enemy's head, by acts

23 The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.

24 It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.

25 As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

26 A righteous man falling down before the wicked, is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.

27 It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory.

28 He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls.

acts of goodness: it is to soften his heart, and dispose him to friendship; which is the natural effect of a generous unexpected goodness. Mr. Benson conjectures, that the phrase, *heaping coals of fire*, &c. is taken from melting metals in a crucible; for when they melt gold or silver in that manner, they do not only put fire under and round all the sides, but also heap coals of fire upon the head of the crucible, and so melt the metal. In allusion to this, Christians are to heap coals of fire, acts of kindness and beneficence, upon the head of an enemy; and so melt down his obstinacy, bring him to temper, and overcome his evil by their good. This is noble, glorious, reasonable, and truly Christian. See Taylor on the Epistle to the Romans, and Schultens' elaborate note on the place.

Ver. 23. The north wind driveth away ruin, &c.] See the Observations, p. 37.

Ver. 26. And a corrupt spring] See the note on 2 Chron. xxxii. 4. Besides the methods of stopping up wells and breaking down cisterns there mentioned, the eastern people sometimes practised another way to deprive their enemies of the use of their waters; namely, by throwing into them such filth as rendered them not drinkable. This was done in particular by the people of a place called Bofferet. Accident also has sometimes, after much the same manner, made them unfit for drinking: so, in the description of the expedition of Baldwin III. against the same town, we are told that his army underwent very great thirst at that time; for, going through the country of Trachonitis, which hath no fountains, only cisterns of rain-water, it happened that at the time he passed through it, these cisterns were rendered useless by means of the locusts which had a little before swarmed to an uncommon degree, and, dying, had occasioned such putrefaction in their waters, as to render the drinking them insupportable. It is not impossible that the *corrupt spring* which Solomon here alludes to, and to which he compares a *righteous man slain by a wicked one*, whose promised usefulness was by that means cut off, might intend a receptacle of water, made useless after this manner; though it must be allowed that the corrupting a rill

CHAP. XXVI.

Observations about fools, about sluggards, and about contentious busy-bodies.

AS snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.

2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back.

4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

of water by making it muddy, is as natural an interpretation. See *Observations*, p. 340.

Ver. 27. It is not good to eat much honey] See on ver. 16. and Isai. vii. 15. Delicious as honey is to an eastern palate, it has been thought sometimes to have produced terrible effects. Thus Sanutus in the *Gesta Dei per Francos*, informs us, that the English who attended Edward I. into the Holy Land died in great numbers, as they marched in June to demolish a place; which he ascribes to the excessive heats, and their intemperate eating of fruits and honey. This, perhaps, may give us the thought of Solomon, contained in this verse. He had before in verse 17 mentioned, that an excess in eating honey occasioned sickness and vomiting; but if it was thought sometimes to produce deadly effects, there is a greater energy in the instruction. However that be, this circumstance seems to illustrate the prophetic passage which speaks of a book sweet in the mouth as a morsel of honey, but after it was down producing pain, bitter as those gripings which the army of Coeur-de-Lion felt in the Holy Land, from eating honey to excess; for of such disorders as are the common effects of intemperance with respect to fruit in those climates, Sanutus appears to be speaking; and the bloody-flux, attended with griping pains, is well-known to be the great complaint. See the *Observations*, p. 160.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 2. As the bird by wandering] "Curses which fly out of men's mouths causelessly shall no more alight where they would have them, than a sparrow which wanders uncertainly, or a dove which flies away swiftly, will settle according to their direction;" or it may be, "Such curses fly as swiftly as those birds, whose property it is to fly up and down, over the head of him against whom they are directed, and never touch him." The words may be rendered, As the sparrow is for wandering, as a wild dove to fly, so the rash curse shall not come.

Ver. 4, 5. Answer not a fool, &c.] They who choose to review antiquity, in its antique garb, will observe, that

6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool, cutteth off the sect, *and* drinketh damage.

7 The legs of the lame are not equal: *so is* a parable in the mouth of fools.

8 As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, *so is* he that giveth honour to a fool.

9 *As* a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, *so is* a parable in the mouth of fools.

10 The great *God* that formed all *things*, both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.

11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, *so* a fool

returneth to his folly.

12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? *there is* more hope of a fool than of him.

13 The slothful *man* saith, *There is* a lion in the way; a lion *is* in the streets.

14 *As* the door turneth upon his hinges, *so doth* the slothful upon his bed.

15 The slothful hideth his hand in *his* bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.

16 The sluggard *is* wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.

17 He that passeth by, *and* meddleth with

had the folly of these fools been only of one condition or denomination, then the advice to *answer*, and *not to answer*, had been repugnant to itself: but as their folly was of various kinds, in some of which to *answer* might offend the dignity, and in others *not to answer* might hurt the interests of truth; to *answer*, and *not to answer* is a consistent, and may, for aught critics know, be a very wise direction. Had the advice been given simply, and without circumstance, to *answer the fool*, and *not to answer him*, a critic, who had reverence for the text, would satisfy himself in supposing that the different directions referred to the doing a thing *in and out of season*. But when to the general advice about answering, this circumstance is added, *according to his folly*, that interpretation is excluded; and a difficulty indeed arises, a difficulty which has made those who have no reverence for the text, accuse it of absurdity and contradiction. But now to each direction reasons are subjoined, *why a fool should*, and *why he should not be answered*; reasons which, when set together and compared, are at first sight sufficient to make a critic suspect that all the contradiction lies in his own incumbered ideas. 1. The reason given, *why a fool should not be answered according to his folly*, is *left be* [the answerer] *should be like unto him*. 2. The reason given, *why he should be answered according to his folly*, is, *left be* [the fool] *be wise in his own conceit*. The cause assigned for *forbidding to answer*, therefore, plainly insinuates, that the defender of religion should not imitate the insulter of it in his modes of disputation, which may be comprized in sophistry, buffoonery and scurrility. The cause assigned of *directing to answer*, as plainly intimates, that the sage should address himself to confute the fool *upon his own false principles*, by shewing that they lead to conclusions very wide from, very opposite to, those impieties which he would deduce from them. What can better produce the effect here intimated, the cure of the fool's vain conceit of his superior wisdom? If any thing can allay the fool's vanity, and prevent his *being wise in his own conceit*, it must be the dishonour of having his own principles turned against himself, and shewn to be destructive of his own conclusions. What can be more mortifying?

Ver. 6. *He that, sendeth a message*] Schultens renders this, *He that cutteth off the feet, he that drinketh down bitter-*

ness, he that sendeth commands by the hand of a fool, are equal: That is, there is the same simplicity in the one as in the other of these actions: The two former expressions are intended to exaggerate the latter; and the meaning of the proverb is, "He that employs a fool to execute his commands, does himself the greatest injury, and will bring upon himself the greatest uneasiness." The Syriac reads, *He drinketh iniquity from under his feet, who sendeth a message by a fool*. The proverbial turn of the expression renders it extremely difficult to be understood.

Ver. 8. *As he that bindeth a stone in a sling*] The plain meaning of this seems to be, what Bishop Patrick has given in his paraphrase; "As a stone put into a sling stays not long there, so is that honour thrown away which is bestowed upon a fool." Houbigant explains it in the same manner. Some of the versions render it, *As he who throweth a stone to Mercury's heap*; which is supposed to be an allusion to the superstitious custom, obliging passengers to throw a stone to such heaps in honour of Mercury; but it is very doubtful whether this custom was so old as Solomon's time. See Calmet's note. Parkhurst supposes the meaning to be, *As a spark, or small piece of precious stone, in a heap of stones, so is he who giveth honour to a fool*. The *precious stone* in one case, and the *honour* in the other, are thrown away and lost. See his Lexicon on the word *ragam*.

Ver. 10. *The great God that formed all things*] There is a great diversity of opinion respecting this verse. Mr. Peters says, that *formed all* is the same as forming the universe, and parallel to *Isai. xlv. 24.*; and if so, our rendering is as unexceptionable as any. Houbigant has it, *The fool and the drunkard imagine great things: the fool and the drunkard pass over the sea*: That is, in the folly and pride of imagination. See his note, and also Schultens.

Ver. 13. *The slothful man saith, &c.*] In this and the following verses, three degrees of sloth are represented; the first, when a man is loth to stir out of doors about his business in the field, in this verse; the second, when he is loth so much as to leave his bed; ver. 14. and the third and highest, when he will scarcely put his hand to his mouth: ver. 15. By which hyperbolical expression, the wise man admirably sets forth the incredible laziness of some, which increases

strife *belonging* not to him, *is like* one that taketh a dog by the ears.

18 As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death;

19 So *is* the man *that* deceiveth his neighbour, and faith, Am not I in sport?

20 Where no wood is, *there* the fire goeth out: so where *there is* no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth.

21 As coals *are* to burning coals, and wood to fire; so *is* a contentious man to kindle strife.

22 The words of a tale-bearer *are* as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

23 Burning lips and a wicked heart, *are like* a potsherd covered with silver dross.

24 He that hateth, dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him:

25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not; for *there are* seven abominations in his heart.

26 *Whose* hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.

27 Who so diggeth a pit, shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.

28 A lying tongue hateth *those that are* afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

C H A P. XXVII.

Observations on self-love, on true love, on care to avoid offences, and on the household care.

BOAST not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

2 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

3 A stone *is* heavy, and the sand weighty: but a fool's wrath *is* heavier than them both.

4 Wrath *is* cruel, and anger *is* outrageous; but who *is* able to stand before envy?

5 Open rebuke *is* better than secret love.

6 Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.

7 The full soul loatheth an honey-comb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing *is* sweet.

8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so *is* a man that wandereth from his place.

C H A P. XXVII.

increases upon them continually, if they will not shake it off: and yet so presumptuous are they withal, he observes ver. 16. that they laugh at those who take a great deal of pains to be wise, and fancy themselves much wiser; because without any pains they can find fault sometimes with other men's works. After this follows an admonition against rashly intermeddling in other men's affairs: against backbiters and dissemblers; especially such as are malicious, and cover the malignity of their minds under fair shews of friendship and esteem.

Ver. 18. Firebrands, arrows, and death.] Firebrands and deadly arrows. Houb.

Ver. 23. Burning lips, and a wicked heart.] Splendid lips, with a wicked heart. Houbigant. The LXX read, Smooth lips, disguising a wicked heart.

Ver. 25. There are seven abominations in his heart.] i. e. A great variety of base and wicked designs.

*Ver. 28. A lying tongue hateth, &c.] A deceitful tongue shall suffer its own example, a deceitful mouth shall fall into ruin. Houbigant. Our translation, however, may be justified; and the meaning is, that it is common for men to hate those to whom they have done ill turns: *Proprium humani ingenii est, odisse quem laeseris*, says Tacitus; and this aversion is always strong in proportion to the greatness and injustice of the wrong which has been done. See Calmet.*

Ver. 5. Open rebuke is better than secret love.] He who takes an ingenuous liberty to tell others of their faults, and rebuke them freely when need requires to their face, is a more valuable friend, though perhaps he may please less, than he who has more of the passion of love in his heart, but makes it not known by such good effects. The parable, says my Lord Bacon, reprehends the soft nature of such friends as will not use the privilege which friendship gives them; in admonishing their friends with freedom and confidence, as well of their errors as of their danger. See Adv. of Learn. book viii. chap. 2. and Plutarch's Treatise on the method of profiting by our enemies.

Ver. 7. The full soul loatheth an honey-comb.] As hunger makes men relish the most distasteful food, when full stomachs loath the most delightful; so poverty has this advantage of plenty, that it disposes men to be thankful for the smallest blessings, though mixed with care and trouble; when the richer sort, if they be not very cautious, are apt to be unsatisfied with, nay, to nauseate their most delicious enjoyments, upon which they have a long time surfeited. Bishop Patrick.

Ver. 8. As a bird that wandereth.] He who quits his country, his dwelling, his house, is as a bird which quits its nest. He is exposed to a thousand dangers and difficulties.

9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so *doth* the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: *for better is a neighbour that is near, than a brother far off.*

11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me.

12 A prudent *man* foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; *but* the simple pass on, and are punished.

13 Take his garment that is surety for a

stranger, and take a pledge of him for a ~~strange~~ woman.

14 He that blesteth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.

15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day, and a contentious woman are alike.

16 Whosoever hideth her, hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, *which bewrayeth itself.*

17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

18 Whoso keepeth the fig-tree, shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.

culties. The Jews were very much attached to their country, and had no fondness for travelling. They were detained within their own country, first, by the motive of their religion, the perfect exercise whereof was confined to Palestine; secondly, by the danger of idolatry, which had then overspread the world; and lastly, by the goodness of their land, which was one of the best in the universe. It was not till after the miseries which befel their nation under Nebuchadnezzar, Salmanassar, and afterwards under the Romans, that we see them forced to disperse themselves through all parts of the world. Some apply this passage to those who quit their condition and calling, and by their inconstancy give themselves up to the snares of the devil, who takes them as the fowler takes young birds who have forsaken their nests before the time. The LXX read *like as a bird is taken, when it leaves its nest; so is man reduced to servitude when he quits his habitation.* See the parable of the prodigal, Luke xv. Calmet.

Ver. 9. *Ointment and perfume*] At the close of a visit in the eastern countries, it is common to sprinkle rose-water, or some other sweet-scented water, on the guests, and to perfume them with aloes wood; which is brought last, and serves as a sign that it is time for a stranger to take his leave. Great numbers of authors take notice of this part of eastern complaisance, but some are much more particular and distinct than others. Maundrell, for instance, who gives a most entertaining account of the ceremony of burning odours under the chin, does not mention any thing of the sprinkling sweet-scented waters; however, many other writers do; and Dr. Pococke has given us the figure of the vessel they make use of upon this occasion in his first volume, plate 57. R. They are both then used in the east; but if one be spoken of more than the other, it is, I think, the perfuming persons with odoriferous smoke. The Scriptures, in like manner, speak of perfumes as used anciently for evil purposes, as well as sacred, though they do not mention particulars. Perhaps the word here rendered *perfume*, comprehends in its meaning the waters distilled from roses, and other odoriferous flowers, whose scents in the east, at least in Egypt, if Maillet may be admitted to be a judge, are much higher and more exquisitely

grateful than with us: but if those distillations should be thought not to have been known so early, the burning of fragrant things, and making a sweet smoke with them, we are sure they were acquainted with. See Exod. xxx. 35. 38. Dan. ii. 46. and the *Observations*, p. 270. The LXX read, *By ointment and wine and incense the heart is made glad; but the soul, or spirit, is broken by misfortunes.*

Ver. 14. *He that blesteth his friend with a loud voice*] “He who spends all his time in nothing else but in extravagant praises of his benefactor, rather disparages than commends him.” Or, it may be, “He that is hasty to commend his friend, does him rather a disservice than a kindness.” Moderate and seasonable praises, says the great Lord Bacon, uttered upon occasion, conduce both to men's fame and prosperity. But, when immoderate, streperous, and unseasonably poured out, they profit nothing; nay rather, according to the sense of this parable, they do much prejudice. For, first, they manifestly betray themselves either to proceed from too much affection, or from studious affectation; whereby they may rather ingratiate themselves with him whom they praise by false commendations, than adorn his person by just and deserved attributes. Secondly, sparing and modest praises commonly invite such as are present to add something of their own to the commendation; contrarywise, profuse and immoderate praises invite the hearers to detract and take away something which belongs to them. Thirdly, which is the principal point—too much magnifying a man stirs up envy towards him; seeing all immoderate praises look like a reproach to others, who think they merit no less.

Ver. 16. *Whosoever hideth her, &c.*] *Whoso locks her up, locks up the winds, and he will take hold of oil with his hand.* Wat. See Hiller Hierophut. p. 210. Houbigant renders it, *He who will confine her at home may confine the wind; for whatsoever he shall seal with his hand [i. e. whatsoever her husband would wish to keep secret] she will bewray or divulge.* The Hebrew is very obscure; *He who hideth her, hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand shall cry out.* “To attempt to keep such a woman in the house, is to attempt to restrain the wind: and as one cannot touch perfumed oil with the hand, but the odour will
“ discover

19 As in water face *answereth* to face, so the heart of man to man.

20 Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

21 As the fining-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.

22 Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds;

24 For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?

25 The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are

gathered.

26 The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field.

27 And thou shalt have goat's milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.

CHAP. XXVIII.

General observations on impiety, and religious integrity.

THE wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

2 For the transgression of a land, many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge, the state thereof shall be prolonged.

“discover itself; so it is fruitless to endeavour to conceal the bad qualities of a quarrelsome woman; spite of all endeavours, she will discover herself.” See Calmet and Schultens.

Ver. 19. *As in water, &c.*] Dr. Grey says, this should be rendered, *As the water sheweth the face to the face, so doth the heart the man to the man.* The meaning is, that a man may know what character he deserves, as well by looking into his own heart, as he can tell what sort of a face he has by looking upon the water. Houbigant renders it, *As faces are like faces, so the heart of one man to another.*

Ver. 21. *So is a man to his praise*] The LXX read, *And a man is tried by the mouth of those who praise him; and so Houbigant renders it.* The meaning is, “That the mind of man is as easily discovered and tried by praises and encomiums, as gold or silver is by fire.” The poet says well,

Cum quis te laudat, iudex tuus esse memento.
Plus aliis de te, quam tu tibi credere noli *.

Some would connect this verse with the following: *The fining-pot purifies silver, and the furnace gold, and a man is purified by affliction:* ver. 22. *But a fool is incorrigible: though you should put him into a mortar, and bruise him like a grain of wheat, you will not make him more wise.* See Calmet.

Ver. 24—27. *For riches are not for ever, &c.*] See Hil-ler. pars ii. p. 9. The author of the Observations remarks, that milk is a great part of the diet of the eastern people. Their goats furnish them with some of it, and, as Dr. Rufsell informs us, are chiefly kept for that purpose; that they yield it in inconsiderable quantities; and that it is sweet and well tasted. This, at Aleppo, is however chiefly from the beginning of April to September, they being generally supplied during the other parts of the year with cow's milk, such as it is; for being commonly kept at the gardens, and fed with the refuse, the milk generally tastes so strong of garlick or cabbage leaves, as to be very disagreeable.

* When others praise thee, remember thou art the best judge of thyself. Be on thy guard, not to believe more in praise of thyself from the commendations of others, than thy own heart testifies to be true.

Might there not be the same difference in Judea in the time of Solomon? And may not his words in this place be designed to express the superior quality of *goat's milk* to that of any other kind in that country?

REFLECTIONS.—Diligence is necessary in every vocation, and the master's eye is essential to the prosperity of his affairs. As the wealth of the east consisted chiefly in their flocks, and the fruit of the field, these are particularly instanced, and reasons given to enforce the needful care over them.

1. Riches are perishable things; even crowns are not secure: therefore it becomes every man to take care of what God has given him, that it be not wasted by his negligence.

2. The liberal provision that Providence has made leaves the negligent inexcusable. The earth, under the divine blessing, produces food for the cattle in abundance, and herbs for the service of man.

3. The benefit accruing from our industry will amply repay our labours. We shall have a sufficiency of clothes, meat, and money for ourselves and our families; and, though plain and homely be the fare, perhaps the more wholesome. Note: (1.) If we must look thus to our flocks, that they may thrive, how much more needful is it for us to search often into the state of our souls, whether they prosper: for without this, what would it profit a man to gain the whole world, if, after all, he lost his immortal soul? (2.) If a sheep be of such value, and require such attendance, how much more the glorious flock which Christ hath purchased with his blood, and committed to our care! Negligence of this trust would be attended with aggravated ruin.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 2. *For the transgression of a land*] *For the sins of a land, the succession of princes is frequent; for men of understanding and justice, the prince shall continue long;* Houbigant: who renders the next verse, *A powerful man oppressing the poor, is a sweeping shower, by which famine is prepared.* Bishop Saunderson observes upon this third verse, which he understands

3 A poor man that oppresseth the poor, *is like* a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

4 They that forsake the law, praise the wicked: but such as keep the law, contend with them.

5 Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all *things*.

6 Better *is* the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than *be that is* perverse in his ways, though he *be* rich.

7 Whofo keepeth the law, *is* a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous *men*, shaineth his father.

8 He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.

9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination.

10 Whofo causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good *things* in possession.

11 The rich man *is* wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.

12 When righteous *men* do rejoice, *there is* great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.

13 He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper: but whofo confesseth and forsaketh *them*, shall have mercy.

14 Happy *is* the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

15 *As* a roaring lion, and a ranging bear, *so is* a wicked ruler over the poor people.

16 The prince that wanteth understanding, *is* also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness, shall prolong *his* days.

17 A man that doeth violence to the blood of *any* person, shall flee to the pit: let no man slay him.

18 Whofo walketh uprightly, shall be saved: but *be that is* perverse in his ways, shall fall at once.

19 He that tilleth his land, shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain *persons*, shall have poverty enough.

20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich, shall not be innocent.

understands according to the common translation. That it is in matters of power, as in matters of learning; they who have but a smattering of scholarship, are observed to be the forwardest to make ostentation of the few scraps they have, for fear there should be no notice taken of their learning, if they should not shew it when they can: and yet then they do it so untowardly, that when they think most of all to display their parts, they most of all, by some gross mistake or other, betray their ignorance. Just so it is in the case of power: when men of base spirits have gotten a little of it into their hands, they conceive their neighbours will not be sensible how important they are, if they do not, by some act or other, shew forth their power to the world. But, having minds too narrow to comprehend any great and generous way of doing so, they cannot frame any other method, than by trampling on those who are below them; which they do beyond all reason, and without any mercy. See his Sermons; Lord Bacon's *Advanc. of Learning*, b. viii. c. 2. and ver. 15.

Ver. 9. *He that turneth away his ear, &c.*] "He who will not hearken to what God directs, nor do what he enjoins, has no reason to pretend to ask any thing of him, and in truth were better not to think of him at all: he had much rather we should not use his name at all, than only mention him in our oaths and blasphemies; and that we should never magnify his power, his providence, or his mercy, rather than make use of those discourses to seditious and sacrilegious purposes. If we

"live like heathens or infidels, our Christian prayers do but affront his majesty, and our praises deprecate his glory."

Ver. 10. *Whofo causeth the righteous, &c.*] The LXX have another verse here: they read, *The wicked shall pass by good things, and shall not enter into them.*

Ver. 12. *A man is hidden*] Houbigant renders the verse, *When just men have the rule, the citizens are much honoured; when a wicked man is in the chief place, they fall.* See ver. 28. This is similar to a sentiment of Mr. Addison's:

When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,
The post of honour is a private station.

Ver. 15. *A ranging bear*] *A howling bear.* Houbigant.

Ver. 16. *The prince that wanteth understanding*] The sense and opposition is better preserved in the LXX: *A prince who is straitened in his revenues is generally a great oppressor; but he, &c.*

Ver. 17. *A man that doeth violence*] Houbigant has it, *If any man is an oppressor, and a liar in wait for blood, when he flieth to a pit, no man shall stop him.* That is, according to Grotius, "Whoever oppresses others, so as to shed innocent blood, will not be withheld or stopped, if he should fly towards covered pitfalls; for the enormity of his crimes will steel every one's breast against him, and no one will shew the least pity towards him."

Ver. 18. *Shall fall at once*] *Shall fall into a pit.* Houbigant after the Syriac.

Ver.

21 To have respect of persons *is* not good : for, for a piece of bread *that* man will transgress.

22 He that hasteth to be rich, *hath* an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

23 He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.

24 Whofo robbeth his father or his mother, and faith, *It is* no transgression; the same *is* the companion of a destroyer.

25 He that is of a proud heart, stirreth up strife; but he that putteth his trust in the LORD, shall be made fat.

26 He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool: but whofo walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

27 He that giveth unto the poor, shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes, shall have many a curse.

28 When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.

CHAP. XXIX.

Observations on public government, and on private. Of anger, pride, theft, cowardice, and corruption.

HE that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth

rule, the people mourn.

3 Whofo loveth wisdom, rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots, spendeth *his* substance.

4 The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts, overthroweth it.

5 A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.

6 In the transgression of an evil man *there is* a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.

7 The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: *but* the wicked regardeth not to know *it*.

8 Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.

9 *If* a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, *there is* no rest.

10 The blood-thirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul.

11 A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

12 If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants *are* wicked.

13 The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes.

14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself*, bringeth his mother to shame.

16 When the wicked are multiplied, trans-

Ver. 25. Shall be made fat] Shall have more abundance. Houbigant. Shall be enriched. See chap. xi. 25.

Ver. 26. He that trusteth in his own heart] He who dependeth upon himself shall fall; but he who walketh warily shall be safe. Houbigant.

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1. Hardeneth his neck] See Exod. xxxii. 9.

Ver. 4. He that receiveth gifts] i. e. He who rigorously exacteth tribute, or requires rich presents to be made to him. Houbigant renders the verse, The king who judgeth justly establisheth the land, he who exacteth gifts overturneth it.

Ver. 5. Spreadeth a net for his feet] Some render this for his own feet, applying it to the flatterer; and so the next verse is understood, which Houbigant translates thus: The wicked man falls himself into the snares which he lays for others; the just man shall deliver himself, and rejoice.

Ver. 9, 10. If a wise man contendeth, &c.] A wise man,

contending in judgment with a foolish man, whether he is provoked or derided, remains unmoved.—Ver. 10. Deceitful men hold the upright in little esteem; but the just embrace him. Houbigant. Schultens renders the last verse, Bloody men hate the upright, and seek the life of the just.

Ver. 12. If a ruler hearken to lies] In conformity to this aphorism, Tacitus says of Claudius, "There is no safety with that prince into whose mind all things are conveyed, as it were, by infusion and direction from others." And Comines observes, that it is better to be servant to a prince whose suspicions have no end, than to one whose credulity hath no measure.

Ver. 13. The poor and the deceitful man meet together] See chap. xxii. 2. where the sentence appears very similar. The LXX read, The usurer and debtor meet together; the Lord has the oversight of them both. The Vulgate, Houbigant, Schultens, &c. read, The poor and the rich, or, The poor and his creditor.

gression increaseth : but the righteous shall see their fall.

17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest : yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

18 Where *there is* no vision, the people perish : but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

19 A servant will not be corrected by words : for though he understand, he will not answer.

20 Seeft thou a man *that is* hasty in his words? *there is* more hope of a fool than of him.

21 He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child, shall have him become his son at the length.

22 An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

23 A man's pride shall bring him low : but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

24 Whoso is partner with a thief, hateth his

own soul : he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.

25 The fear of man bringeth a snare : but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD, shall be safe.

26 Many seek the ruler's favour ; but every man's judgment *cometh* from the LORD.

27 An unjust man *is* an abomination to the just : and *he that is* upright in the way, *is* abomination to the wicked.

C H A P. XXX.

Agur's confession of his faith. The two points of his prayer. The meanest are not to be wronged. Four wicked generations. Four things insatiable. Parents are not to be despised. Four things hard to be known. Four things intolerable. Four things exceeding wise. Four things flatly. Wrath is to be prevented.

THE words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy : the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal.

Ver. 18. Where there is no vision, &c.] Houbigant renders this verse, *That people is dissipated, among whom there are no answers of the prophets : that people is blessed with whom the law is preserved ; which is very similar to the Vulgate.* The LXX read, *A wicked people shall have no person to explain the law ; but, &c.* The word *חֶזֶן* *chazon*, rendered *vision*, signifies a prophetic sight, or knowledge ; and very well justifies the interpretation of the Vulgate and Houbigant. A principal branch of this prophetic knowledge consisted in teaching the law.

Ver. 19. A servant will not be corrected by words] “ A slave, and he who is of a servile nature, is not to be amended by reason or persuasion : no, nor by reproofs or threats ; for though he hear, and understand too, what you say, yet he will not obey, till he be forced into it by blows.” The LXX read, *A stubborn or obstinate servant will not, &c.*

Ver. 21. He that delicately bringeth up his servant, &c.] Lord Bacon, observing that most of the aphorisms in these last chapters refer to princes and their affairs, remarks on this verse, That both princes and private masters should keep a mean in the dispensation of their grace and favour towards servants ; which mean is three-fold ; first, that servants be promoted by degrees, not by leaps ; secondly, that they be now and then accustomed to repulses ; thirdly, that they have ever in their sight before them something whereunto they may further aspire : for unless these courses be taken in raising of servants, princes shall, instead of thankful acknowledgments and dutiful observance, be repaid with nothing but disdain and contumacy ; for from sudden promotion arises insolence ; from constant attainment of their desire proceeds impatience of refusal ; and when there is nothing remaining for future

expectation, alacrity and industry will cease. See Advan. of Learn. as above. The Chaldee and LXX read this verse, *He who nourisheth himself delicately from his youth, shall become a slave, and at the end shall miserably perish.* See Rom. vii. 24.

Ver. 24. He heareth cursing, &c.] The LXX and Vulgate read, *He heareth him who adjureth him, but will not declare or impeach.* The words may be rendered, *He is adjured, and yet makes not discovery.* See Lev. v. 1. The sense is, that “ He who will not discover a thief, when adjured or summoned upon oath to discover him, is as bad as the “ thief himself.” See Grotius and Schultens.

Ver. 25. The fear of man bringeth a snare] *He who feareth man shall be driven into a snare [or shall fall]. He who trusteth in the Lord shall be established.* When men do not abstain from evil, but from respects and considerations merely human, they presently fall. There is no virtue, no solid piety, but that which is founded upon the fear and love of God. When the heart is not penetrated with the love of goodness, and fear only withholds the hand, there is neither solid virtue, nor true abhorrence of evil. Another sense may be given to the Hebrew. *He who feareth man, who serves him, and attaches himself to him, shall fall into a snare ; but he who hopeth in the Lord shall be lifted up ; shall escape the danger, and avoid the snares.* The LXX read, *Impiety causeth man to fall ; but he who trusteth in the Lord shall be safe.*

C H A P. XXX.

Ver. 1. The words of Agur, &c.] According to the signification of the original terms, this might be rendered, *The words of him who has recollected himself, the son of obedience.* The generality of the fathers and ancient commentators

2 Surely I *am* more brutish than *any* man, and have not the understanding of a man.

3 I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.

4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what *is* his name, and what *is* his son's name, if thou canst tell?

5 Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield

unto them that put their trust in him.

6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

7 ¶ Two *things* have I required of thee; deny me *them* not before I die:

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me;

9 Lest I be full and deny *thee*, and say, Who *is* the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God *in vain*.

tators will have it that Solomon describes himself under the name of Agur, the son of Jakeh; others conjecture that *Agur*, as well as *Lemuel*, in the next chapter, were wise men who lived in the time of Solomon, and were his interlocutors in the book of Proverbs; an opinion without the least show of probability. This book is nothing like a dialogue. It is most probable that Agur was an inspired author, different from Solomon, whose *moral and proverbial sentences* (for such is the import of the word rendered *prophesy*) it was thought most convenient to join with those of this prince, because of the conformity of their matter; for what could ever have obliged Solomon to disguise his name in this place? For what reason could he have changed his style and manner of writing in this chapter only? for it is certain, that this chapter is penned in a way very different from the rest of the book. Besides, could it become Solomon to speak as this author does in the second verse, or to address himself to God as he does in the eighth? Certainly these words are not consistent with the situation of a king like Solomon. But who then was this Agur? When and where did he live? This is what no one yet has ever been able to tell us. See Calmet, and Bishop Lowth's 18th Prelection.

Even the prophesy, &c.] This may be rendered, *The man spake a prophesy or sententious discourse to Ithiel, and Ithiel to Ucal.* These two persons are supposed to have been scholars and friends of Agur, who came to him to be instructed in the principles of true wisdom. He begins with modestly declaring his own insufficiency for so great an undertaking (*I am more dull than the rest of men, and void of human prudence*); and recommends, as the foundation of all useful knowledge, an humble temper of mind, sensible of all the natural weakness of human understanding, and of the imperfection of its highest improvements; which he argues, ver. 4. from our ignorance of the works of nature. (See the parallel passages in the Book of Job :) And therefore in the two following verses he advises his two pupils to make it their principal study to understand the will of God, which is of all knowledge the most important, and of the greatest use in human life; and in all their inquiries of this kind, to confine themselves to what God has revealed. See Foster's Sermons, vol. I. serm. viii. and Deut. xxx. 11—14.

Ver. 6. Add thou not unto his words] That is, "Do not any thing contrary to what he commands." See Deut. iv. 2 to 32, &c.

Ver. 8, 9. Give me neither poverty, &c.] These words are introduced in the form of an address to God, in answer, perhaps, to some question which the disciples had proposed to Agur about the duty of prayer. What Agur prays for is, such a proportion of the good things of this world, as may best answer the end of living. It must be observed, that the terms *poverty* and *riches* are relative, and not absolute. They are relative to the particular state and circumstances in which each person is placed; so that what is *riches* to one will be *poverty* to another of higher station; on the contrary, what is *poverty* to one, will be *riches* to another in a meaner condition. This prayer, therefore, is not a prayer for a *middle* state of life, *absolutely*; as it has been often understood to be; but it is a prayer for a sufficiency, for a due measure, a fit and just proportion of things necessary and convenient for us, in whatever station we are; without want, without excess. And in this view the prayer is an *universal* prayer, and may with equal propriety be used by the high and the low; just as both high and low and all men universally pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." If we consider the prayer in the other light, as a request for a middle station of life *absolutely*, then it is evidently impossible that it should be *universal*; it being not possible to suppose that the *middle* station can be the lot and condition of all. The danger which attends a state of great riches and superfluity is expressed thus, *Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?* To deny God, is to act and live as if there were no righteous Governor and Judge of mankind to whom we are accountable, as well as directly to disown his being and providence; or, in a more confined sense, it implies irreligion and prophaneness, a disregard and contempt of Providence, and other crimes which are committed more *directly* and more *immediately* against God himself. As truth may be denied by actions, as well as by words, this is declared atheism. He who lives as if there were no governing Providence, however he may admit in theory the existence of a First Cause, yet in practice he denies that Being to be God: for the notion of God, in the moral and religious sense, is always relative to servants or subjects, and signifies not barely the absolute perfection of nature, but dominion and sovereignty, and the moral government of the world. The temptations to which *poverty* is exposed are, *stealing, and taking the name of God in vain.* The latter clause certainly means more than common swearing, because there does not seem to be a greater connection

10 ¶ Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.

11 *There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.*

12 *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

13 *There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eye-lids are lifted up.*

14 *There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw-teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.*

15 ¶ The horse-leach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, *It is enough.*

16 The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, *It is enough.*

17 ¶ The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

18 ¶ There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not:

19 The way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a maid.

20 Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.

nection between that vice and poverty, than riches; it therefore probably signifies perjury, to which poverty and distress are great temptations. See Foster's Sermons, as above, and Harveſt's 5th Sermon.

Ver. 10. *Accuse not a servant unto his master*] Do not abuse any poor slave, whose condition is wretched enough; and therefore rather excuse than aggravate his fault to his master, who perhaps is too rigorous; and be sure never to load him with unjust accusations, lest, being wronged by thee, and not knowing how to right himself, he appeal to the Lord, and pray him to punish thee; and thou, being found guilty, feel the heavy effects of his vengeance. See Bishop Patrick.

Ver. 11—14. *There is a generation, &c.*] These verses seem to contain cautions against keeping company with certain persons; 1. Those who are ungrateful to their parents; 2. dissembling hypocrites, ver. 12.;—3. supercilious proud men, ver. 13.;—4. cruel and uncompassionate men; tyrants, extortioners, calumniators, &c.

Ver. 15. *The horse-leach hath two daughters*] This passage seems in my judgment, says Bishop Patrick, to be an answer to some such question as this (which the scholars had propounded to Agur, after the manner of enigmatical discourses) *What is most unsatiable?* which he chooses to give an account of in this place, the better to represent the nature of those wicked men of whom he had spoken before; especially the two last, the proud and the tyrannical, or extortioner; whose desires are a gulph which can never be filled. At first he seems to have thought but of two things; namely the grave, and the barren womb, which might properly be called the daughters of the horse-leach: but he presently adds another; nay, and a fourth came into his mind, as no less insatiable: this he expresses after the manner of the Hebrews, who, intending to mention four things, or more, separate them at first, and begin with a lesser number, and then proceed to all that they designed. We have an example hereof in the 18th and 21st verses; in chap. vi. 16.; and in Amos, i. 3. 5. 9. The LXX,

in the Roman edition, read: *The horse-leach hath three beloved daughters, and these three are never satisfied; and there is a fourth, which saith not, it sufficeth:* and the unlearned reader will remark, that in our translation a number of words are thrown in, which being taken away, would very much assimilate ours to the translation of the LXX. See Scheuchzer on the place.

Ver. 17. *Despiseth to obey his mother*] *Despiseth the old age of his mother.* "They who are guilty of such enormous ingratitude to their parents, shall come to an infamous end, and their dead bodies shall be exposed for a prey to the ravens which frequent the brooks that run into the vallies, and to the young eagles, who shall pick out those eyes in which their scorn and derision of their parents was wont to appear."

Ver. 19. *And the way of a man with a maid*] See Isai. vii. 14. I would just observe upon this passage, that some have understood it as a reference to the incarnation of the Word in the Virgin Mary. The word *עלמא* *almah*, rendered *maid*, signifies a virgin strictly speaking; and *גבר* *geber*, rendered *a man*, may signify *the man*, or *great one*, by way of eminence; but for more on this text the reader is referred to Schultens' very accurate discussion of it. Houbigant thinks that the sacred writer here refers to the human conception, which is, indeed, truly miraculous and incomprehensible.

Ver. 20. *Such is the way of an adulterous woman*] The wife man adds, that this also is another of the things which he cannot understand. As *idolatry* is frequently expressed in Scripture by adultery, some commentators think that the adulterous woman here means an idolatress, who, having eaten of the sacrifice offered to an idol, wipeth her mouth, in order to conceal her crime, and afterwards audaciously persists in asserting that she is innocent. The plain meaning, however, seems to be, that it is difficult to conceive how a woman who is an adulteress can so openly and impudently deny herself to be so, when there are the most manifest and indubitable proofs of it.

Ver.

21 ¶ For three *things* the earth is disquieted, and for four *which* it cannot bear :

22 For a servant when he reigneth ; and a fool when he is filled with meat ;

23 For an odious *woman* when she is married ; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

24 ¶ There be four *things which* are little upon the earth, but they *are* exceeding wise :

25 The ants *are* a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer ;

26 The conies *are but* a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks ;

27 The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands ;

28 The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

29 ¶ There be three *things* which go well, yea, four are comely in going :

30 A lion, *which is* strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any ;

31 A greyhound ; an he-goat also ; and a king, against whom *there is* no rising up.

32 ¶ If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, *lay* thine hand upon thy mouth.

33 Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood : so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

Ver. 21—23. For three things the earth is disquieted] We have here an answer to another enigmatical question, What things are most intolerable ? Which he tells us are, 1. A slave who bears rule ; 2. A fool over-fed ; 3. A vicious wife in a family ; 4. A servant-maid become mistress of the house. This is very clear, and but too well confirmed by experience. A slave, or a man of an obscure condition, and of a mean servile soul, who domineers over others, is a subject of vexation and pain to them. If it be difficult to endure a master, even of illustrious birth, what must we think of a man who is lifted from servitude to a throne ? he must have many degrees of excellence above another, not to be looked upon with jealousy and pain ; and, unless endued with great grace, will be more cruel, and more insolent than another :

— *Regnabit sanguine multo
Ad regnum quisquis venit ab exilio.*

He will not be sparing of blood who, from a state of slavery, ascends to a throne.

A slave high-fed, and too much at his ease, very often despises his master. Solomon has informed us before, (chap. xxix. 21.) that he who brings up his servant too delicately from his childhood, will soon see him insolent and disobedient. The same prince has frequently painted the inconveniences and disagreements of an ill-suited marriage, and the company of a quarrelsome, and not beloved wife. It is as a house which continually disgusts, and is open to every wind. Though the law allowed of repudiating this kind of wives, it rarely happened that this liberty was made use of, on account of other considerations of decorum, family, and the difficulties which were expressly urged in the courts of justice against the execution of the law. Lastly, a servant who has taken the place of her dead or repudiated mistress, commonly becomes insupportable to the whole house, and particularly to her husband's other wives ; for we must suppose polygamy in Palestine among the Jews. The jealousy of wives against wives is as it were an unquenchable fire. Witness the case of Hagar, the servant of Sarah, Gen. xvi. 5.

Ver. 26. The conies] *The mountain-mice—the rock-rats.* See Lev. xi. 5.

Ver. 27. Yet go they forth all of them by bands] *Yet go they forth sharing all amongst them.* See Boch. tom. i. pr. 15.

Ver. 28. The spider] *The lizard.* Schultens, &c.

Ver. 31. A greyhound, &c.] Houbigant renders it, *A cock who erects himself in his walking ; a he-goat, who marches before the flock ; a king, who goeth forth, his retinue attending.* See his note.

Ver. 33. Surely, the churning of milk] This verse is connected with that preceding, and may be thus paraphrased : “ For from little things there is an easy progress unto greater ; and just as you see milk is first pressed out of the cow's udder, and then, being agitated in the churn, is forced into butter ; and as the nose, being wrung, though at first it only purify itself, yet if it be harder pressed, issues forth blood ; so words passing to and fro raise a heat, and that, if continued, stirs up anger, which frequently ends in broils and irreconcilable quarrels.” Patrick.

REFLECTIONS.—Who this Agur was, is immaterial for us to inquire ; it is enough that he wrote under prophetic inspiration, either directing his discourse to Ithiel and Ucal, his children or his disciples ; or speaking concerning *Ithiel and Ucal* ; (as many suppose) names applicable to the great Messiah, *God with me*, and *the mighty one*, able to save to the uttermost ; or addressed to him as the Saviour and Deliverer of his faithful people, who hears their prayers, and delivers them out of all their troubles.

1. He humbly confesses his sin and ignorance. *Surely I am more brutish than any man, or a brute rather than a man* ; such blindness and ignorance is in man's fallen nature, such perverseness and corruption in his heart : and they who have the deepest knowledge of themselves, discovering more of the folly and sin of their own hearts, than they can possibly see in others, will adopt with deepest sensibility the confession ; and have not the understanding of a man, of Adam in innocence, or of men in general. *I neither learned wisdom by any power of my own, nor can I understand it unless taught of God ; nor have the knowledge of the holy ones ; for imperfect are the highest attainments of knowledge* respecting

C H A P. XXXI.

Lemuel's lesson of chastity and temperance. The afflicted are to be comforted and defended. The praise and properties of a good wife.

TH E words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.

2 What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?

3 Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.

4 *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:*

5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

6 ¶ Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.

7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

respecting the divine Being and his glorious perfections; and the things of God can no man know but by the Spirit of God.

2. He exalts the glory of the great Creator and Redeemer of men: none but he ever could reveal the deep things of God, who came down from heaven, and is ascended thither, John iii. 13. By his power the stormy winds are restrained, the clouds are wrapped up as in a garment, the deep in swaddling-bands: the earth, founded upon the flood, spoken into being at his word, and upheld by his providence: but who can declare his generation, whose hands have made all these things? *what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?* We are lost the moment we set ourselves to the inquiry; for who by searching can find out God, his nature, perfections, the divine paternity or filiation, and all the other mysteries hid in the triune God? Here we must bow and silently adore.

3. He commends the excellence of God's word. *It is pure*, without the least human mixture or adulteration, and tending to produce purity of heart and life in all who receive the scriptures in the light and love of them: it is *faithful*, none ever trusted the promises and were disappointed; but they, who, according to his word, have made God their refuge, have ever found him their shield to ward off every danger: it is *perfect*, incapable of improvement; it were daring presumption in man to add thereto, and such arrogance would provoke God's rebukes, and issue in the confusion of those who should pretend to set up their traditions or fancies on a level with the revelation of God.

C H A P. XXXI.

Ver. 1. The words of king Lemuel] This chapter, say the generality of commentators, contains Bathsheba's words to Solomon, and his commendation of her. Some, however, have doubted whether *Lemuel* was not a different person. "I know," says Dr. Delaney, "that some modern critics, contrary to the unanimous judgment and tradition of all antiquity, have raised some scruples upon this head, as if *Lemuel* were not Solomon, but some other king, they know not who. I have examined them with all the care and candour I am capable of, and conclude upon the whole that their objections were such as my readers of best understandings would be little obliged to me either for retailing, or refuting. I shall barely men-

tion that of greatest weight; it is this, That his mother, thrice in this chapter, when she calls him her *son*, makes use of the word *בן bar*, to express it by: a word nowhere used throughout the whole Old Testament, except in the second psalm, at the 12th verse. This then is the strength of the objection; that Solomon cannot be *Lemuel*, because *Lemuel's* mother calls him *son*, by a word which no sacred writer ever made use of before, except *Solomon's* father upon a like occasion. Besides, the very name sufficiently shews *Lemuel* to be *Solomon*; for *Lemuel* signifies *belonging to God*; and to whom can this possibly be applied so properly, as to *Solomon*, to whom God expressly declared he would be a father." See *Delaney's* Life of *David*, book iv. chap. 21. and *Calmet* on the place. *Grotius* conjectures, that *Hezekiah* was the person here meant, and that these proverbs were collected by his mother *Abiah*, the daughter of *Zechariah*, a person illustrious for his wisdom; and taught him as the precepts of his father. *Houbigant* renders it, *The words of Lemuel, king of Mesha, with which his mother instructed him.* See *Gen. x. 30.*

Ver. 2. What, my son, &c.] *Solomon* tells us, chap. iv. 3. that he *was tender and only-beloved in the sight of his mother.* The reader cannot have a finer comment upon that passage, than the beginning of this lecture to *Lemuel*, where his mother breaks out at once into this excess of tenderness, *What, my son, &c.*

Ver. 3. Give not thy strength, &c.] *David* had admonished his son, chap. vi. 20, &c. *to keep the commandment of his father, and not forsake the law of his mother; for the commandment, said he, is a lamp, and reproofs of instruction are the ways of life, to keep thee from the evil woman:* and can there be a greater uniformity than betwixt that monition and this, *Give not thy strength unto women, &c.?* And may not the reproofs which follow be justly intitled; *proofs of instruction?* When these reproofs of instruction are recited, then follows, *ver. 10.* a regular poem in praise of an accomplished woman; each verse beginning with a different letter, in the series of the alphabet; and certainly nothing can be more natural than the judgment of the best critics upon it, that *Lemuel* characterises his mother in a poem written in honour of her. See *Delaney* as above. We may just remark, that as the first nine chapters of the proverbs are considered as a preface to what is commonly called the Book of Proverbs; the attentive reader will find all the precepts from the beginning of the 4th chapter to the

8 Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

10 ¶ Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband doth safely

trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

13 She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

14 She is like the merchant ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

the end of the ninth, to be only recitals of David's instruction to his son Solomon.

Ver. 8. Open thy mouth for the dumb] *Open thy mouth for the dumb; give judgment to those who have experienced the vicissitudes of human affairs.* The latter clause may be rendered, *In the cause of all strangers, or all children of change.*

REFLECTIONS.—We have here,

1. The address of Bathsheba to her son Solomon: *What, my son?* Either it intimates the tender concern with which she spoke; or, as if she wanted words to enforce the lesson she was about to deliver; or, as designed to awaken his attention; or as an exhortation, having observed in him a tendency to the evils from which she would dissuade him, and which were so unbecoming a prince: and hereunto the following words seem most suited: *What, the son of my womb?* have I brought thee forth with sorrow, and educated thee with such parental care? and shall it be fruitless? hear what the tenderest affection dictates; and grant me (it is all I ask) this small return for all my pains: *and what, the son of my vows?* devoted to God from earliest infancy; the son of many prayers; and doubly criminal it would be in such to be unfaithful. *Note;* (1.) That mother shews true tenderness to her children, who labours to bring them up from earliest infancy in the discipline and admonition of the Lord; and the more exalted their station, the more carefully their education deserves to be attended to. (2.) We must plead with our children the many prayers which have been offered for them, and the obligations they are under of being early devoted to God, and acquainted with his word, as what will render their unfaithfulness more ungrateful and inexcusable.

2. Her warning. [1.] Against lewdness: one false step had nearly ruined his father; and by this sin kingdoms have been overturned. [2.] Against drunkenness: the moderate use of wine and other good things, is not forbidden; but all excess in a king were doubly criminal and scandalous; it is a profanation of their dignity, disqualifies them for the discharge of their high estate, gives the most pernicious example to their subjects, makes God's law forgotten, and lays them open to exercise wanton tyranny and cruel injustice. *Note;* If drunkenness be so unbecoming a king, how ought those who are anointed kings and priests unto God to be especially careful of excess, and shun whatever should lead them to so dishonourable a deed.

3. Her advice: To be liberal, compassionate, the advocate of the oppressed, and the upright magistrate: these are the things which exalt a king. Instead of abusing

affluence, employ it for the use of the needy, *give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish,* to support his fainting spirits, and *wine unto those that be of heavy hearts,* to revive them when dejected, low, and in distress. *Let him drink moderately and forget his poverty,* his spirits being cheered and refreshed, and *remember his misery no more.* Wine thus employed is well bestowed. How much better thus to put our bottle to our indigent neighbour's mouth to revive his fainting soul, than in excess to drown his senses? *Spiritually,* this represents the state of a sinner's soul, distressed under a sense of guilt, perishing under the apprehension of the divine wrath, conscious of his abject spiritual poverty: to them the sweet wine of gospel-promises should be freely given, that a sense of the love of God in Christ may cheer their drooping hearts; and by faith, drinking in a rich supply of mercy and grace, they may forget their poverty, and no more consider their misery, God having forgiven their iniquity, and promised to heal all their infirmities. Instead of negligence or oppression, *open thy mouth for the dumb,* be the advocate of the disconcerted or ignorant, who cannot plead their own cause; and rescue them from their cruel persecutors, who seem bent on their destruction. *Open thy mouth with boldness and zeal, judge righteously,* without respect to persons, unawed by any consideration, and *plead the cause of the poor and needy,* whose meanness might expose them to be trampled upon, their cause neglected, or their right over-ruled.

Ver. 10. Who can find a virtuous woman, &c.] The versions in general agree in reading this, *a strong woman.* The word *חַיִל* *chail*, signifies firmness of body or mind; and is applied to strength of different kinds, agreeably to the context; and therefore may with great propriety be rendered, *a virtuous woman,* or a woman of a strong and excellent mind. See on chap. xii. 4.

Ver. 13. Worketh willingly with her hands] *From which she forms that which her hands require.* Houbigant. The LXX render it, *She maketh precious or useful work with her hands.*

Ver. 14. She is like the merchant ships] The woman of œconomy is, with regard to her husband, like a ship which comes from foreign countries freighted with all kinds of wealth. She brings to her husband an abundance of goods of all sorts. Under the name of *food,* or bread, is comprehended provision in general. This verse might be paraphrased, "She lays up in her house all sorts of provisions, like a vessel, which, arriving from a long voyage, brings all kinds of precious merchandize." The LXX render it, *She is like a merchant-vessel, which bringeth riches from afar.* Calmet.

Ver.

15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and

her hands hold the distaff.

20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry: her clothing is silk and purple.

23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

Ver. 15. She riseth also while it is yet night] She doth not indulge herself in too much sleep, but is an early riser, before the break of day, to make provision for those who are to go abroad to work in the fields, and to set her maidens their several tasks at home. The reader will observe, that the ideas here refer to those modest and ancient times, when female occupations were far different with those even of highest rank, from such as are usual in modern times. The employments of Penelope, in Homer, are similar to those here referred to; and the following comparison of Virgil will throw some light on the present description:

He rose refresh'd impatient from the bed,
When half the silent hours of night were fled;
What time the frugal and laborious dame,
Who plies the distaff, stirs the dying flame;
Employs her maidens by the winking light,
And to their daily labour adds the night:
Thus earning frugally her children's bread,
And keeping uncorrupt her nuptial bed.

ÆN. viii. ver. 410.

Ver. 16. She considereth, &c.] With the fruit of her hands, means, With the fruit of her works;—her œconomy, her gain. She finds means by her industry and labour to make acquisitions of land, and to plant a vineyard. It is not without design, that Solomon says, *She considereth a field* which she intends to purchase: herein he gives advice to those who apply themselves seriously to œconomy, not to spare their pains in visiting and considering the land which they wish to purchase. "See it as often as you can," says Cato; "the oftener you go to it the more it will please, if it be good:" *Quoties ibis, toties magis placebit, quod bonum erit.* See Cato de Re Rustic. cap. II. who observes of the farmer, that he is the first of his family to arise from bed, and the last to go to it.

Ver. 17. She girdeth her loins with strength] It is not sufficient for the mother of a family to command, to exhort, to pray: if she would be well obeyed, and have her work well done, she must put her hand to it. The servant finds nothing too difficult, in which his master or mistress join their labours with him. *To gird herself,* signifies to put herself in a condition to labour. The LXX render this verse, *She girdeth herself tight about the waist, and setteth her arms to work;* more pleased with this girdle about her loins, than with one the most rich and precious worn by luxurious

dames; with this fortitude and industry on her arms, than with the richest bracelets of prouder females.

Ver. 18. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good] *She perceiveth that her merchandise is advantageous.* Houbigant. The LXX read, *She finds that it is good to work.* "Finding "by sweet experience not only how wholesome labour is, "but what profit her traffic yields, she doth not conclude "her work with the day, but continues it as much in "the night as can be spared from necessary sleep." See the next verse. Very similar to this is what Penelope says to Ulysses:

*Nec mihi querenti spatiosam fallere noxem,
Lassaret viduas pendula tela manus.*

Nor, seeking to deceive the tedious night,
Would the worn distaff tire thy widow'd hands.

See Ovid's Epistle of Penelope to Ulysses, and Pope's Odyss. book i. ver. 455.

Ver. 21. For all her household are clothed with scarlet] This seems an inconsistent translation; for, will scarlet keep a person warmer than any other colour? Would it not have been more consistent with the context to have said, *Because they are clothed in warm raiment?* The margin of our Bible, agreeably to this remark, reads, *double garments;* and I think it is universally agreed, that the marginal readings are always nearest the original; and so I find it in the present case. For the word *סָבָנִים* *spanim*, is not only plural, but comes from the root *סָבָנָה* *spanah*, which signifies to repeat, to do again, to double; and is often rendered by the LXX, *διπλον* and *διεζον* *double-died*, and by the Vulgate, *bisindum;* and in this place the Vulgate renders it by *duplicibus*, or *double garments.* Schultens and Houbigant agree in the above translation. We may observe, that in consequence of this excellent woman's œconomy, her house is not only well provided for, but she herself is enabled to excel in works of benevolence, ver. 20. and to appear according to her station, ver. 22. while her husband finds with his wealth his dignity and honour increase; chosen to sit among the judges, and distinguished among the first men of his city; ver. 23. Who that compares the different descriptions given in this book, of adultery and virtuous love, of the good wife and the ruinous harlot, but must admire the propriety of the description, and rejoice in the pleasing superiority which virtue hath in this respect also over vice and debauchery.

Ver.

24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

25 Strength and honour *are* her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28 Her children arise up and call her blessed: her husband *also*, and he praiseth her.

29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

30 Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain; but a woman *that* feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Ver. 24. Delivereth girdles unto the merchant] Herodotus, it seems, thought that the carrying on of commerce by the Egyptian women was a *curiosity* which deserved to be inserted in his history: it can hardly be thought an impropriety to take notice of this circumstance in a work calculated for the illustration of the Scriptures, and especially in a country where the women indeed *spin*, but the men not only buy and sell, but weave, and do almost every thing else relative to our manufactures. The commerce mentioned by Herodotus is lost, according to Maillet, from among the women of Egypt in general, being only retained by the Arabs of that country who live in the mountains. The Arabian historians say, that the women used to deal in buying and selling of things woven of silk, gold, and silver, of pure silk, of cotton, of cotton and thread, or simple linen-cloth, whether made in the country or imported; the men, in wheat, barley, rice, and other productions of the earth. Maillet, giving an account of the alteration in this respect in Egypt, affirms, that this usage still continues among the Arabs who live in the mountains; and, consequently, he must be understood to affirm, that the things which are woven among the Arabs, and sold, are sold by the women, who are indeed the persons that weave the men's *bykes* in Barbary, according to Dr. Shaw, and who doubtless weave in Egypt. Now this is precisely what the present passage supposes the Israelitish women who were industrious anciently did. *She maketh fine linen, and selleth it, and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.* However this may seem to our manners, it is what perfectly agreed with the simplicity of the most ancient times, and is accordingly retained by the Arabs, who are noted for keeping to old usage. See the *Observations*, p. 402.

Ver. 31. Give her of the fruit of her hands] In these latter verses, the sacred writer expresses the felicity of this virtuous woman, dutiful children, a grateful and affectionate husband (ver. 28.); general esteem and approbation (ver. 30). Some render this verse, *Men reward her from the fruit of her hands; her works shall celebrate her in the gate.* i. e. "The single recital of her good works will compose her sufficient eulogy."

Behold here, then, the picture of a virtuous woman, according to Solomon; a person of no ordinary rank, or obscure condition; her husband appears with distinction in the midst of princes and senators; he has no need to apply himself to his domestic concerns; her house is full of riches, and she is surrounded with maidens. She is not urged by parsimony and meanness to make profit of her labour, and that of her people: simple elegance shines in her vestments and those of her husband, in her furniture,

and in her beds, and in her whole house. Piety, the fear of God, and wisdom, constitute her character. Vigilant, active, laborious, she remains at home, assiduous to conduct her household, and to bring up her children. Despising superfluous gewgaws and frivolous occupations, gentle towards her domestics, liberal to the poor, and prudently confining and limiting herself to the employments suitable to her: *She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.* In her life we see neither gaming, nor diversion, nor high living, nor idleness, nor useless visits; no quarrels, or slanders, or those other abuses which form the most serious employment of women of the world, who are not under a necessity of earning their livelihood. Calmet is of opinion, that Solomon gives us in this portrait the picture of his mother Bathsheba. See the first note on this chapter. It must, however, be acknowledged, that there are some traits which cannot with strict propriety be applied to the wife of David; and perhaps the sacred writer had only in view to give us the general character of a virtuous matron and mistress of a family.

REFLECTIONS.—Let us, for a few moments, take a review of this beautiful description of what good wives should be. It is a pattern that they ought all to copy according to their respective stations. We have,

1. The inquiry made after such a virtuous woman. Many appear well at a distance, set off with every genteel accomplishment, and in person and manners engaging, who, when proved, often deceive men's expectations, and leave them without remedy to mourn the rashness and folly of their choice: but where God in mercy is pleased to bestow on us a helpmate, truly excellent, whose amiableness appears greatest the nearer she is viewed, and the more she is tried; *her price indeed is far above rubies.*

2. Her description:

[1.] She behaves so as to engage and deserve the entire confidence of her husband: she never gives him the least occasion for jealousy, or reason to doubt her discretion in the management of his domestic affairs; has no separate interests, nor ever wastes on herself in needless expence his substance; *so that he shall have no need of spsial*, driven to extortion to supply her extravagance. *She will do him good; study his temper, make it her delight to please him, seek his advantage, and do every thing which may contribute to his comfort, profit, and honour in this world and in the next, and this all the days of her life.*

[2.] She is active and industrious, and looks narrowly into her affairs; neither eats *the bread of idleness*, nor loves the bed of sloth: her house is the scene of order, diligence,

and frugality. She does not love to dress, and visit, and card, and saunter at public places; her house is her happiness, and her domestic employments her delight. Her family is up before the day, and breakfasted, ready for their work as soon as the light arises; and each have their allotted portion, and know their proper employment; herself in the midst of them sets the encouraging example; and, having provided *wool and flax* at the most advantageous market, *worketh willingly with her hands*, not regarding it as a burden, but counting her duty her pleasure. Her work is not some foolish finery, which may be more properly called idleness than labour, but will be of use to her family. She is not ashamed of the spindle and the distaff, and with the candle-light lengthens out the day, till the fit time of repose arrives.

[3.] She is wise in the disposition of what she has wrought, and knows how to turn it to the best advantage, whether for domestic uses, or to exchange with the merchants.

[4.] She is charitable. Though she lays up a provision for her family, it is not at the expence of the poor; her hands are open to relieve their necessities, and the indigent ever find in her a bountiful friend: her diligence and oeconomy enable her both to provide for her own, and to have much besides to spare for the poor.

[5.] Her family appears in the greatest credit. *Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land*; her good conduct advances his reputation; his wealth increases by her management: even his very dress, and that of his attendants, bespeak her care of his honour.

[6.] To enhance her character. *She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness*; never haughty, assuming, sullen, peevish, contentious; but her language is tender endearment, and dutiful submission; she would rather hear than speak: when she offers her advice to her husband, she pretends not to dictate, but refers herself to his determination; avoids every occasion of dispute, or wisely yields to his superior judgment; and all her family are hearers of her gracious discourse. As she wishes to govern her household by love, not by threatening, her very commands are obliging, and her corrections tempered with gentleness.

[7.] To crown the whole: she is truly religious: *she feareth the Lord*; is governed in all her conduct by the principles of his word, and a regard for his glory; and this adds double lustre to all her other excellencies. Beauty of person is pleasing, but it is a fading transient thing, compared with the more substantial beauty of the mind: disease may soon crop, and age must quickly wither this fair flower; but time shall more improve the graces of the soul, and render the union of kindred spirits, heirs together of the grace of life, more intimate and endeared.

3. The blessedness of such conduct will be great.

[1.] It will procure praise and honour from all around: her husband will thank God, and count himself happy in such a partner; her children will bless her care, and grow

up to acknowledge and adorn her gracious instructions: every eye will own her virtues; and *she shall be praised*, as worthy a name among the most excellent and honourable of women; whilst her own husband will not allow her equal to be found, and admires her as the flower of her sex.

[2.] She will have cause to rejoice in all time to come; her works continuing to speak her excellence; she shall reap the fruit of her hands; strength and honour shall be her constant clothing in this world; and in the world to come she shall receive the reward of fidelity, and rejoice eternally there, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but the souls of the glorified saints are advanced to a state of higher blessedness than mortality ever knew, and are made like unto the angels.

Some have thought that this description is mystical, and applicable to the spouse of Christ, the church, whose inviolable purity and fidelity render her dearer to him than rubies; yea, he proved how highly he valued her, when he bought her with his blood: he trusts her with his gospel, his ordinances, his children, assured of her care over them: his honour and interests are her constant concern for ever. The external garments of profession, and the white linen, the righteousness of saints, are, through grace, her constant labour. By prayer and communion with God, she goes out, as merchant-ships, to heaven, and returns, fraught with the bread of life, from that far country. The stewards of her mysteries, rising early, dispense to each their portion, feeding each member of the family with those words of truth which are suited to their state and condition. The scripture is the field that she purchases, and she is enriched thereby: a purchase, indeed, made without money, and without price, Matt. xiii. 44. Isa. lv. 1.; and in her vineyard new converts are daily planted, and grow up to bring forth fruit unto God. She labours for the glory of her Lord, and the good of the souls intrusted to her, with all her might. Her merchandise of grace is better than silver; her lamp of profession ever burning; and in the darkest night of adversity her hope is never extinguished. She is incessant in well-doing, and her spirit is charity itself. Her house is decently adorned, and her ordinances administered with dignity. Her husband, the great Bridegroom of souls, is known, honoured, and adored both by his saints below, and by angels above. Her ministers, receiving of her stores, make a rich return of precious souls. Strong in grace, and honourable, she shall rejoice in all the ages of time and eternity. The doctrines of divine wisdom, and gospel grace, are by her dispensed. Her discipline is exact, and no idleness suffered under her roof. The members of Christ, her children, bless God for their mercies, and pray for her peace and prosperity; and the Lord himself approves her fidelity, and gives her the highest commendation. All other beauty, and human glory, shall fade; but to eternity shall the church of the faithful-redeemed be for a praise; when her works follow her, and Christ shall bestow upon her the promised recompence of eternal bliss.