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A Poem by David.

PSALM 16: 1 Preserve me, God, for in you do I take refuge.

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The contents of this Psalm are usually given in the following manner: David, sojourning among idolaters, and being obliged to leave his own country through Saul's persecution, cries to God for help; expresses his abhorrence of idolatry, and his desire to be again united to God's people, Psa 16:1-4; and dedares his strong confidence in God, who had dealt bountifully with him, Psa 16:5-7. Then follows a remarkable prophecy of the resurrection of Christ, Psa 16:8-11.

The title of this Psalm in the Hebrew is **לְדָוִד מִכְתָּם** *michtam ledavid*, which the Chaldee translates, "A straight sculpture of David." The Septuagint, *Στηλογραφία τῷ Δαυιδ*, "The inscription on a pillar to David;" as if the Psalm had been inscribed on a pillar, to keep it in remembrance. As **מִכְתָּם** *catham* signifies to engrave or stamp, this has given rise to the above inscription. **מִכְתָּם** *michtam* also means pure or stamped gold; and hence it has been supposed that this title was given to it on account of its excellence: a golden Psalm, or a Psalm worthy to be written on letters of gold; as some of the verses of Pythagoras were called the golden verses, because of their excellence. Gold being the most excellent and precious of all metals, it has been used to express metaphorically excellence and perfection of every kind. Thus a golden tongue or mouth, the most excellent eloquence; so Chrysostom means, this eminent man having had his name from his eloquence; - a golden book, one of the choicest and most valuable of its kind, etc. But I have already sufficiently expressed my doubts concerning the meanings given to these titles. See the note on the title of Psa 60:1-12 (note).

That David was the author there can be no doubt. It is most pointedly attributed to him by St. Peter, Act 2:25-31. That its principal parts might have some relation to his circumstances is also probable; but that Jesus Christ is its main scope, not only appears from quotations made by the apostle as above, but from the circumstance that some parts of it never did and never could apply to David. From the most serious and attentive consideration of the whole Psalm, I am convinced that every verse of it belongs to Jesus Christ, and none other: and this, on reference, I find to be the view taken of it by my ancient Psalter. But as he is referred to here as the Redeemer of the world, consequently, as God manifested in the flesh, there are several portions of the Psalm, as well as in the New Testament, where the Divine and human natures are spoken of sepparately: and if this distinction be properly regarded, we shall find, not only no inconsistency, but a beautiful harmony through the whole.

Verse 1

Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust - On the mode of interpretation which I have hinted at above, I consider this a prayer of the man Christ Jesus on his entering on his great atoning work, particularly his passion in the garden of Gethsemane. In that passion, Jesus Christ most evidently speaks as man; and with the strictest propriety, as it was the manhood, not the Godhead, that was engaged in the suffering. **שְׁמֹרֵנִי** *shomreni*, keep me - preserve, sustain, this feeble humanity, now about to bear the load of that punishment due to the whole of the human race. For in thee, **חָסִיתִי** *chasithi*, have I hoped. No human fortitude, or animal courage, can avail in my circumstances. These are no common sufferings; they are not of a natural kind; they are not proportioned to the strength of a human body, or the energy of a human spirit; and my immaculate humanity, which is subjected to these sufferings, must be dissolved by them, if not upheld by thee,

the strong God. It is worthy of remark, that our Lord here uses the term, אֱלֹהִים El, which signifies the strong God, an expression remarkably suited to the frailty of that human nature, which was now entering upon its vicarious sufferings. It will be seen with what admirable propriety the Messiah varies the appellations of the Divine Being in this address; a circumstance which no translation without paraphrase can express.

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PSALM 16: 2 My soul, you have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord. Apart from you I have no good thing."

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#### Verse 2

Thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord - Thou hast said לַיהוָה layhovah to Jehovah, the supreme, self-existing, and eternal Being; Thou art my Lord, אֲדֹנָי אַתָּה adonai attah, Thou art my prop, stay, or support. As the Messiah, or Son of God, Jesus derived his being and support from Jehovah; and the man Christ was supported by the eternal Divinity that dwelt within him, without which he could not have sustained the sufferings which he passed through, nor have made an atonement for the sin of the world; it is the suffering Messiah, or the Messiah in prospect of his sufferings, who here speaks.

My goodness extendeth not to thee - There are almost endless explanations of this clause; no man can read them without being confounded by them. The Septuagint read ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν μου οὐ χρείαν ἔχεις; Because thou dost not need my goods. The Vulgate follows the Septuagint. The Chaldee: My good is given only by thyself.

So the Syriac: My good is from thee. The Arabic: Thou dost not need my good works. And in this sense, with shades of difference, it has been understood by most commentators and critics.

Bishop Horsley translates, Thou art my good - not besides thee. Dr. Kennicott, My goodness is not without thee.

I think the words should be understood of what the Messiah was doing for men. My goodness, תּוֹבָתִי tobathi, "my bounty," is not to thee. What I am doing can add nothing to thy divinity; thou art not providing this astonishing sacrifice because thou canst derive any excellence from it: but this bounty extends to the saints - to all the spirits of just men made perfect, whose bodies are still in the earth; and to the excellent, אֲדִירֵי addirey, "the noble or supereminent ones," those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. The saints and illustrious ones not only taste of my goodness, but enjoy my salvation. Perhaps angels themselves may be intended; they are not uninterested in the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord. They desire to look into these things; and the victories of the cross in the conversion of sinners cause joy among the angels of God.

The קְדוֹשִׁים kedoshim, "saints," or consecrated persons, may refer to the first planters of Christianity, evangelists, apostles, etc., who were separated from all others, and consecrated to the great important work of preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. With these was all the desire, חֶפֶץ chephets, the good will and delight of Christ. In all their ministrations he was both with them and in them.

The passage, taken as referring to David, intimates that he abhorred the company of the profane and worthless, and delighted to associate with them that excelled in virtue.

On these two verses the translation and paraphrase of my old Psalter must not be forgotten: - Psa 16:1 Conserva me, Domine, etc.

Trans. Kepe me Lord, for I hoped in the; I said til Lord, my God thou ert; for, of my gudes thou has na nede.

Par - The voice of Crist in his manhede; prayand til the fader, and sayand: Lord, fader, kepe me imang peplis, for I hoped in the, nocht in me. I said til the, my God, thou ert in that, that I am man; for thou has no nede of my godes; bot I haf of the, al that I haf; here is the wil pride of men confounded; that evenes that thai haf ought of tham self bot syn. Psa 16:2 Sanctis qui sunt in terra, etc.

Trans. Til halowes the qwilk er his land, he selcouthed all my willes in tham.

Par - Noght til wiked, bot til halows clene in saule, and depertid fra erdly bysynes, the qwilk er in his land: that es, that haf fested thair hope in the land of heven; and rotyd in luf: the qwilk hope es als anker in stremys of this werld. He selcouthed al my willes, that of wonderful, he made my willes, of dying and rysing, sett and fulfilled in tham: that es, in thair profete, qware in that feled qwat it profeted tham my mekenes that wild dye, and my myght to rise.

PSALM 16: 3 As for the saints who are in the earth, they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight.

PSALM 16: 4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied who give gifts to another god. Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, nor take their names on my lips.

#### Verse 4

Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god - The Chaldee has: "They multiply their idols, and afterwards hasten that they may offer their gifts." In the Hebrew text there is no word for God, and therefore Messiah or Savior might be as well substituted; and then the whole will refer to the unbelieving Jews. They would not have the true Christ; they have sought, and are seeking, another Messiah; and how amply fulfilled has the prophetic declaration been in them! Their sorrows have been multiplied for more than 1800 years.

The Vulgate and Septuagint, and after them the Ethiopic and Arabic, have given this clause a widely different turn: "their afflictions have been multiplied, and afterwards they have run swiftly;" referring to the suffering saints: the more they were afflicted and persecuted, the more fervent and prosperous they became.

Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer - נֶסֶח nesech is a libation, whether of wine or water, poured out on the sacrifice. A drink-offering of blood is not a correct form of expression; it is rather the libation on the blood of the sacrifice already made. Coverdale translates the same; but Mathewes, who reformed his text in a few places, has Their brente offeringes of bloude, without much mending the text; though by this the exceptionable idea of a drink-offering of blood is avoided. As applicable to our Lord, here is an intimation that their libations and sacrifices should cease. None of these should exist under the Christian dispensation; Jesus Christ's offering upon the cross being the accomplishment and termination of all such sacrifices.

Nor take up their names into my lips - None of those sacrifices shall be mentioned with any kind of respect after the end of their institution shall have been accomplished; for sacrifice, offering, burnt-

offering, and sacrifice for sin, such as are offered according to the law, God would no longer receive; therefore Jesus said; "Lo, I come to do thy will; a body hast thou prepared me." Since that time all these sacrifices have ceased. The old Psalter is curious: - Psa 16:4 Multiplicate sunt infirmitates eorum; postea acceleraverunt.

Trans. Manyfaldend er thair sekene: and sythen thai hasted thaim.

Par - That es at say; thai knew that thai war ful seke in body and saule, and sythen thai hasted thaim til the Leche; for he that feles him seke, he sekis remedy. Il men wenes that thai er nocht seke for thi that dye in thair syn.

Non congregabo conventicula eroum de sanguinibus, etc.

Trans. I sal nocht gadyr the coventes of tha of blodes; ne I sal be menand of their names thurgh my lippis.

Par - That est at say, by the coventes of haly men, my servaundes sal nout fleschely, but gastly: for "blode" bytakyns syn and unclenes that that er in, that folous thair flesche, and the vanites of thair blode; that er comen of grete kyn. Ne I sal by menand of thair names; for thai er chaunged fra syn till ryghtwisnes on domesday, qwen I sal speke thurgh my lippes til thaim that halde the name of wykednes: sa ye weryed til fyer with outen end.

PSALM 16: 5 The LORD assigned my portion and my cup. You made my lot secure.

Verse 5

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance - The Messiah speaks. Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance; I seek no earthly good; I desire to do the will of God, and that only. It is God who has given me this lot - to redeem mankind - to have them for mine inheritance. From him I have received the cup of suffering, which I shall drink for their sake, through which I shall impart to them the cup of consolation. He, by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man; and he has instituted the cup of blessing to commemorate his passion and death.

PSALM 16: 6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places. Yes, I have a good inheritance.

Verse 6

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places - Here is an allusion to the ancient division of the land by lot among the Israelites, the breadth and length being ascertained by lines which were used in measuring. I have got a rich inheritance of immortal spirits; and I myself, as man, shall have a name above every name, and be raised to thy throne, on which I shall sit, and be admired in my saints to all eternity.

I have a goodly heritage - A Church, an innumerable multitude of saints, partakers of the Divine nature, and filled with all the fullness of God. And these shall dwell with me in the heaven of heavens to all eternity. The old Psalter: - Psa 16:5 Dominus pars hereditatis mee et calicis mei, etc.

Trans. Lord es part of myn herytage and of my chalyce; thow ert that sal restore myn herytage til me.

Par - Lord the fader es part, that es, he es porcioun and mede of myn herytage; that es of haly men, qwam I weld in herytage. Other men cheses tham what tham lyst: my part es God, and he es part of my chalyce: that es, he es my copp of al my delyte and boor. Wereldys men drynkes the venemus lustes, and the drubly delytes of lychery and covatys: I in my halows sal drynk God; for thu ert fadyr that sal restore till me, that es, til my men, myn herytage, that thai lost in Adam: that es thu restores til tham the knowyng of my bryghthede. Psa 16:6 Punes ceciderunt michi in preclaris, etc.

Trans. Strynges fel to me in ful bryght: for qwy, myn herytage is ful bryght til me.

Par - Strynges, that er merkes of my possessioun, in thi bryghtnes, fel als with cutte; als the possessioun of prestes and dekens in the alde law, was God; for qwy myn herytage, that es haly men es bryght til me of that seme layth and aute castyng til some of the werld, til me thai er fairer and bryght.

PSALM 16: 7 I will bless the LORD, who has given me counsel. Yes, my heart instructs me in the night seasons.

#### Verse 7

Who hath given me counsel - Jesus, as man, received all his knowledge and wisdom from God; Luk 2:40-52. And in him were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

My reins also instruct me - כִּלְיוֹתַי kilyothai, reins or kidneys, which from their retired situation in the body, says Parkhurst, and being hidden in fat, are often used in Scripture for the most secret workings and affections of the heart.

The kidneys and their fat were always to be burnt in sacrifice, to indicate that the most secret purposes and affections of the soul are to be devoted to God.

In the night seasons - That is, in the time of my passion, my secret purposes and determinations concerning the redemption of man support me. "For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame;" Heb 12:2.

PSALM 16: 8 I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

#### Verse 8

I have set the Lord always before me - This verse, and all to the end of Psa 16:11, are applied by St. Peter to the death and resurrection of Christ. Act 2:25, etc.

In all that our Lord did, said, or suffered, he kept the glory of the Father and the accomplishment of his purpose constantly in view. He tells us that he did not come down from heaven to do his own will, but the will of the Father who had sent him. See Joh 17:4.

He is at my right hand - That is, I have his constant presence, approbation, and support. All this is spoken by Christ as man.

I shall not be moved - Nothing can swerve me from my purpose; nothing can prevent me from fulfilling the Divine counsel, in reference to the salvation of men.

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PSALM 16: 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoices. My body shall also dwell in safety.

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Verse 9

Therefore my heart is glad - Unutterably happy in God; always full of the Divine presence; because whatsoever I do pleaseth him. The man Christ Jesus must be constantly in communion with God, because he was without spot and blemish.

My glory rejoiceth - My tongue, so called by the Hebrews, (see Psa 57:8; Psa 30:12), because it was bestowed on us to glorify God, and because it is our glory, being the instrument of expressing our thoughts by words. See Dodd. But soul bids as fair to be the meaning. See the notes on Act 2:25, etc.

My flesh also shall rest in hope - There is no sense in which these and the following words can be spoken of David. Jesus, even on the cross, and breathing out his soul with his life, saw that his rest in the grave would be very short: just a sufficiency of time to prove the reality of his death, but not long enough to produce corruption; and this is well argued by St. Peter, Act 2:31.

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PSALM 16: 10 For you will not leave my soul in Sheol, neither will you allow your holy one to see corruption.

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Verse 10

Thine Holy One - This is in the plural number, חַסִּידִים chasideycha, thy Holy Ones; but none of the versions translate it in the plural; and as it is in the singular number, חַסִּידִים chasidecha, in several ancient editions, among which is the Complutensian Polyglot, and no less than two hundred and sixty-four of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., and in the quotation by St. Peter, in Act 2:27; Act 13:35, we may take it for granted that the present reading is a corruption; or that חַסִּידִים is an emphatic singular.

As to leaving the soul In hell, it can only mean permitting the life of the Messiah to continue under the power of death; for שְׁאוֹל sheol signifies a pit, a ditch, the grave, or state of the dead. See the notes on the parallel places, Act 2:25 (note), etc.

See corruption - All human beings see corruption, because born in sin, and liable to the curse. The human body of Jesus Christ, as being without sin, saw no corruption.

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PSALM 16: 11 You will show me the path of life. In your presence is fullness of joy.

In your right hand there are pleasures forever more.

## Verse 11

Thou wilt show me the path of life - I first shall find the way out of the regions of death, to die no more. Thus Christ was the first fruits of them that slept. Several had before risen from the dead, but they died again. Jesus rose from the dead, and is alive for evermore. Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead was the first entrance out of the grave to eternal life or lives, חַיִּים *chaiyim*, for the word is in the plural, and with great propriety too, as this resurrection implies the life of the body, and the life of the rational soul also.

In thy presence - פָּנֶיךָ *panycha*, thy faces. Every holy soul has, throughout eternity, the beatific vision, i.e., "it sees God as he is," because it is like him; 1Jn 3:2. It drinks in beatification from the presence of the Eternal Trinity.

Thy right hand - The place of honor and dignity; repeatedly used in this sense in the Scriptures.

Pleasures for evermore - נֶצַח *netzach*, onwardly; perpetually, continually, well expressed by our translation, ever and more; an eternal progression. Think of duration in the most extended and unlimited manner, and there is still more; more to be suffered in hell, and more to be enjoyed in heaven. Great God! grant that my readers may have this beatific sight; this eternal progression in unadulterated, unchangeable, and unlimited happiness! Hear this prayer for His sake, who found out the path of life, and who by his blood purchased an entrance into the holiest! Amen and Amen.

For the application of the whole Psalm to David, see the analysis at the end, which is a little altered from David's Harp Strung and Tuned.

The remains of this Psalm in the old Psalter are worthy to be inserted: - 1Jn 3:7 *Benedicam Dominum qui tribuit michi intellectum*, etc.

Trans. I sal blis the Lord that gaf til me undyrstandyng; and over that til the nyght, suyled me my neres.

Par - That es I sal luf the fader that hafs gyfen undyrstandyng til my servauntes, thurgh the qwilk the herytage of heven may be sene and welded; and aver that undyrstandyng, in the qwilk I saw, sais Crist, al sothefast thynges and haly. Of that I sal lof him that my nerys that es the Jewis of qwas kynd I toke flesch, that es my kyn snybbed me in wranges and temptaciounis, and passiouns, til the nyght, that es al the dede thai missaid hym, als so oure nerys; that es our fleschely delytes makes us worthy snybbyng til our dede; for perfyte may we nocht be with outen syn, qwyles we lyf. 1Jn 3:8 *Providebam Dominum in conspectu meo*, etc.

Trans. I pervaide God ay in my syght; for he es at the ryght hand til me, that I be nout styrrid.

Par - And in al thys anguys I for gatt nout God: bot I pervayde hym ay in my syght; that es, I comande o mang passand thynges: I toke nout my nee fra hym that ay es; bot I fested it in hym, so that he was ay in my sight, and he es nout fyled in synnes that assyduely with the ee of his thoght, byhaldes God, for he es at the ryght hand of me: that I be nocht styred; that es, he helps me in desyre of endless gudes, that I last stabil in hym, and for thi nane il thyng may haf mayster of me. 1Jn 3:9 *Propter hoc, elatum, est cor meum, et exultavit lingua mea*, etc.

Trans. Thar fore gladdid es my hert, and my toung joyed over that, and my flesch sal rest in hope.

Par - This es ful joy that in hert es resayved, and with tounge schewed, and over that joy in hert and mouth, my flesch sal rest in hope of rysyng. 1Jn 3:10 Quoniam non derelinques in Inferno animam meam, etc.

Trans. For thou sal nocht lefe my Saule in hell, ne thou sal nocht gyf thi Halow to se corrupcion.

Par - That es at say, the Saule that I haf als veray man, sal nocht be left in hell; and my body that thou haloued, sal nocht rote. Here men may know that this es goddes word; for other mens bodis rotes. 1Jn 3:11 Notas michi fecisti vias vite, etc.

Trans. Knowen thou maked til me, the wayes of lyf: thou sal fil me of joy with thi face, delytynges in thi ryghth and in til the end.

Par - Knowen thou maked thurgh me till myne, the wayes of lyf, that es the wayes of mekenes and charite, that men came til heven thurgh mekenes, fra qwethyn thai fel thurgh Pryde: and thou sal fil me; that es, my servaundes, of joy with thi face; that es, in the syght of the, apertly; so that thai desyre nothing over, qwen thai af sene the, face til face, and ay til than delytynges til tham in way of this lyf. In thi ryght hand; that es thi favoure, and thi mercy the qwilk delytyngs ledys tham intil the ende, that es, in til perfectioun of endeles Blisfulhede.

I have given the whole of the translation and comment of this Psalm from this ancient Psalter, as a curious specimen of the doctrine and language of our northern neighbors in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.