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A Psalm by David.

PSALM 110: 1 The LORD says to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool for your feet."

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The Messiah sits in his kingdom at the right hand of God, his enemies being subdued under him, Psa 110:1, Psa 110:2. The nature and extent of his government, Psa 110:3. His everlasting priesthood, Psa 110:4. His execution of justice and judgment, Psa 110:5, Psa 110:6. The reason on which all this is founded, his passion and exaltation, Psa 110:7.

The Hebrew, and all the Versions, except the Arabic, attribute this Psalm to David: nor can this be doubted, as it is thus attributed in the New Testament. We have in it the celebration of some great potentates accession to the crown; but the subject is so grand, the expressions so noble, and the object raised so far above what can be called human, that no history has ever mentioned a prince to whom a literal application of this Psalm can be made. To Jesus Christ alone, to his everlasting priesthood and government, as King of kings and Lord of lords, can it be applied.

The Jews, aware of the advantage which the Christian religion must derive from this Psalm, have labored hard and in vain to give it a contrary sense. Some have attributed it to Eliezer, the servant or steward of Abraham; and state that he composed it on the occasion of his master's victory over the four kings at the valley of Shaveh, Genesis 14: Others say it was done by David, in commemoration of his victory over the Philistines. Others make Solomon the author. Some refer it to Hezekiah, and others to Zerubbabel, etc.: but the bare reading of the Psalm will show the vanity of these pretensions. A King is described here who is David's Lord, and sits at the right hand of God; a conqueror, reigning at Jerusalem, King from all eternity - having an everlasting priesthood, Judge of all nations, triumphing over all potentates, indefatigable in all his operations, and successful in all his enterprises. Where has there ever appeared a prince in whom all these characters met? There never was one, nor is it possible that there ever can be one such, the Person excepted to whom the Psalm is applied by the authority of the Holy Spirit himself. That the Jews who lived in the time of our Lord believed this Psalm to have been written by David, and that it spoke of the Messiah alone, is evident from this, that when our Lord quoted it, and drew arguments from it in favor of his mission, Mat 22:42, they did not attempt to gainsay it. St. Peter, Act 2:34, and St. Paul, 1Cor 15:25; Heb 1:13; Heb 5:6, Heb 5:10; Heb 7:17; Heb 10:12, Heb 10:13, apply it to show that Jesus is the Messiah. Nor was there any attempt to contradict them; not even an intimation that they had misapplied it, or mistaken its meaning. Many of the later Jews also have granted that it applied to the Messiah, though they dispute its application to Jesus of Nazareth. All the critics and commentators whom I have consulted apply it to our Lord; nor does it appear to me to be capable of interpretation on any other ground. Before I proceed to take a general view of it, I shall set down the chief of the various readings found in the MSS. on this Psalm. Psa 110:1 Said unto my Lord. Instead of לאדני ladoni, "my Lord," one MS. seems to have read ליהוה layhovah, "Jehovah said unto Jehovah, 'Sit thou on my right hand,'" etc. See De Rossi.

Thy footstool. הדם לרגליך hadom leragleycha, "the footstool to thy feet." But eight MSS. drop the prefix ל le; and read the word in the genitive case, with the Septuagint, Vulgate, and Arabic. Many also read the word in the singular number. Psa 110:3 Instead of בהדרי קדש behadrey kodesh, "in the beauties of holiness," בהררי קדש beharerrey kodesh, "in the mountains of holiness," is the reading of

thirty our of Kennicott's MSS., and fifty-three of those of De Rossi, and also of several printed editions.

Instead of ילדתך yaldutheca, "of thy youth," ילדתיך yaladticha, "I have begotten thee," is the reading, as to the consonants, of sixty-two of Kennicott's and twenty-three of De Rossi's MSS., and of some ancient editions, with the Septuagint, Arabic, and Anglo-Saxon. Psa 110:4 After the order, על דברתי al dibrathi, דברתו dibratho, "His order," is the reading of twelve of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. Psa 110:5 The Lord, אדני adonai: but יהוה Yehovah is the reading of a great number of the MSS. in the above collections. Psa 110:6 Instead of בגוים baggoyim, "among the heathens" or nations, גוים goyim, "he shall judge the heathen," is the reading of one ancient MS.

Instead of ראש rosh, "the head," ראשי rashey, "the heads," is the reading of one MS., with the Chaldee, Septuagint, Vulgate, and Anglo-Saxon. Psa 110:7 For ירים yarim, "he shall lift up," ירום yarom, "shall be lifted up," is the reading of six MSS. and the Syriac.

Instead of ראש rosh, "The head," ראשו rosho, "His head," is the reading of two MSS. and the Syriac.

A few add יהוה halelu Yah, "Praise ye Jehovah;" but this was probably taken from the beginning of the following Psalm.

The learned Venema has taken great pains to expound this Psalm: he considers it a Divine oracle, partly relating to David's Lord, and partly to David himself.

1. David's Lord is here inducted to the highest honor, regal and sacerdotal, with the promise of a most flourishing kingdom, founded in Zion, but extending every where, till every enemy should be subdued.
2. David is here promised God's protection; that his enemies shall never prevail against him; but he must go through many sufferings in order to reach a state of glory.
3. The time in which this oracle or prophecy was delivered was probably a little after the time when David had brought home the ark, and before he had his wars with the neighboring idolatrous nations. The kingdom was confirmed in his hand; but it was not yet extended over the neighboring nations.

#### Verse 1

The Lord said unto my Lord - Jehovah said unto my Adoni. That David's Lord is the Messiah, is confirmed by our Lord himself and by the apostles Peter and Paul, as we have already seen.

Sit thou at my right hand - This implies the possession of the utmost confidence, power, and preeminence.

Until I make thine enemies - Jesus shall reign till all his enemies are subdued under him. Jesus Christ, as God, ever dwelt in the fullness of the Godhead; but it was as God-man that, after his resurrection, he was raised to the right hand of the Majesty on high, ever to appear in the presence of God for us.

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PSALM 110: 2 The LORD will send out the rod of your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of your enemies.

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#### Verse 2

The rod of thy strength - The Gospel - the doctrine of Christ crucified; which is the powerful scepter of the Lord that bought us, is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword; and is the power of God to salvation to all them that believe.

The kingdom of our Lord was to be founded in Zion, and thence, by gradual conquests, to be extended over the whole earth. It was in Zion the preaching of the Gospel first began; and it is by the Gospel that Christ rules, even in the midst of his enemies; for the Gospel extends a moralizing influence over multitudes who do not receive it to their salvation.

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PSALM 110: 3 Your people offer themselves willingly in the day of your power, in holy array. Out of the womb of the morning, you have the dew of your youth.

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### Verse 3

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power - This verse has been wofully perverted. It has been supposed to point out the irresistible operation of the grace of God on the souls of the elect, thereby making them willing to receive Christ as their Savior. Now, whether this doctrine be true or false it is not in this text, nor can it receive the smallest countenance from it. There has been much spoken against the doctrine of what is called free will by persons who seem not to have understood the term. Will is a free principle. Free will is as absurd as bound will, it is not will if it be not free; and if it be bound it is no will. Volition is essential to the being of the soul, and to all rational and intellectual beings. This is the most essential discrimination between matter and spirit. Matter can have no choice; Spirit has. Ratiocination is essential to intellect; and from these volition is inseparable. God uniformly treats man as a free agent; and on this principle the whole of Divine revelation is constructed, as is also the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. If man be forced to believe, he believes not at all; it is the forcing power that believes, not the machine forced. If he be forced to obey, it is the forcing power that obeys; and he, as a machine, shows only the effect of this irresistible force. If man be incapable of willing good, and nilling evil, he is incapable of being saved as a rational being; and if he acts only under an overwhelming compulsion, he is as incapable of being damned. In short, this doctrine reduces him either to a punctum stans, which by the vis inertiae is incapable of being moved but as acted upon by foreign influence; or, as an intellectual being, to nonentity. "But if the text supports the doctrine laid upon it, vain are all these reasonings." Granted. Let us examine the text. The Hebrew words are the following: עמך נדבת ביום חילך ammecha nedaboth beyom cheylecha, which literally translated are, Thy princely people, or free people, in the day of thy power; and are thus paraphrased by the Chaldee: "Thy people, O house of Israel, who willingly labor in the law, thou shalt be helped by them in the day that thou goest to battle."

The Syriac has: "This praiseworthy people in the day of thy power."

The Vulgate: "With thee is the principle or origin (principium) in the day of thy power." And this is referred, by its interpreters, to the Godhead of Christ; and they illustrate it by Joh 1:1 : In principio erat Verbum, "In the beginning was the Word."

The Septuagint is the same; and they use the word as St. John has it in the Greek text: Μετα σου η αρχη εν ημερα της δυναμεως σου. "With thee is the Arche, or principle, in the day of thy power."

The Ethiopic is the same; and the Arabic nearly so, but rather more express: "The government, riasat, exists with thee in the day of thy power."

The Anglo-Saxon, "With thee the principle in day of thy greatness."

The old Psalter, With the begynnyngs in day of thi vertu. Which it thus paraphrases: "I, the fader begynnyng with the, begynnyng I and thou, an begynnyng of al thyng in day of thi vertu."

Coverdale thus: "In the day of thy power shal my people offre the free-will offeringes with a holy worship." So Tindal, Cardmarden, Beck, and the Liturgic Version.

The Bible printed by Barker, the king's printer, 4th. Lond. 1615, renders the whole verse thus: "Thy people shall come willingly at the time of assembling thine army in the holy beauty; the youth of thy womb shall be as the morning dew."

By the authors of the Universal History, vol. iii., p. 223, the whole passage is thus explained: "The Lord shall send the rod, or scepter, of thy power out of Sion," i.e., out of the tribe of Judah: compare Gen 49:20, and Psa 78:68. "Rule thou over thy free-will people;" for none, but such are fit to be Christ's subjects: see Mat 11:29. "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," i.e., when all power shall be given him, both in heaven and earth; Mat 28:18. "In the beauties of holiness," which is the peculiar characteristic of Christ's reign, and of his religion.

None of the ancient Versions, nor of our modern translations, give any sense to the words that countenances the doctrine above referred to; it merely expresses the character of the people who shall constitute the kingdom of Christ. נָדַב nadab signifies to be free, liberal, willing, noble; and especially liberality in bringing offerings to the Lord, Exo 25:2; Exo 35:21, Exo 35:29. And נָדִיב nadib signifies a nobleman, a prince, Job 21:8; and also liberality. נְדָבָה nedabah signifies a free-will offering - an offering made by superabundant gratitude; one not commanded: see Exo 36:3; Lev 7:16, and elsewhere. Now the עַם נְדָבוֹת am nedaboth is the people of liberality - the princely, noble, and generous people; Christ's real subjects; his own children, who form his Church, and are the salt of the world; the bountiful people, who live only to get good from God that they may do good to man. Is there, has there ever been, any religion under heaven that has produced the liberality, the kindness, the charity, that characterize Christianity? Well may the followers of Christ be termed the am nedaboth - the cheerfully beneficent people. They hear his call, come freely, stay willingly, act nobly, live purely, and obey cheerfully.

The day of Christ's power is the time of the Gospel, the reign of the Holy Spirit in the souls of his people. Whenever and wherever the Gospel is preached in sincerity and purity, then and there is the day or time of Christ's power. It is the time of his exaltation. The days of his flesh were the days of his weakness; the time of his exaltation is the day of his power.

In the beauties of holiness - בְּהַדְרֵי קֹדֶשׁ behadrey kodesh, "In the splendid garments of holiness." An allusion to the beautiful garments of the high priest. Whatever is intended or expressed by superb garments, they possess, in holiness of heart and life, indicative of their Divine birth, noble dispositions, courage, etc. Their garb is such as becomes the children of so great a King. Or, They shall appear on the mountains of holiness, bringing glad tidings to Zion.

From the womb of the morning - As the dew flows from the womb of the morning, so shall all the godly from thee. They are the dew of thy youth; they are the offspring of thy own nativity. As the human nature of our Lord was begotten by the creative energy of God in the womb of the Virgin; so the followers of God are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but by the Divine Spirit.

Youth may be put here, not only for young men, but for soldiers; - so the Trojana juvenus "the Trojan troops," or soldiers, in Virgil, Aen. 1: ver. 467; - and for persons, courageous, heroic, strong, active, and vigorous. Such were the apostles, and first preachers of the Gospel; and, indeed, all genuine Christians. They may be fully compared to dew, for the following reasons: -

1. Like dew, they had their origin from heaven.
2. Like dew, they fructified the earth.
3. Like dew, they were innumerable.
4. Like dew, they were diffused over the earth.
5. Like dew, they came from the morning; the dawn, the beginning of the Gospel day of salvation.
  1. As the morning arises in the East, and the sun, which produces it, proceeds to the West; so was the coming of the Son of man, and of his disciples and apostles.
  2. They began in the East - Asia Proper and Asia Minor; and shone unto the West - Europe, America, etc. Scarcely any part of the world has been hidden from the bright and enlivening power of the Sun of Righteousness; and now this glorious sun is walking in the greatness of its strength.

Saw ye not the cloud arise,  
 Little as a human hand?  
 Now it spreads along the skies,  
 Hangs o'er all the thirsty land.  
 Lo, the promise of a shower  
 Drops already from above;  
 But the Lord will shortly pour  
 All the spirit of his love.

The heavenly dew is dropping every where from the womb of the morning; and all the ends of the earth are about to see the salvation of God.

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PSALM 110: 4 The LORD has sworn, and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek."

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Verse 4

The Lord hath sworn - Has most firmly purposed, and will most certainly perform it, feeling himself bound by his purpose, as an honest man would by his oath.

And will not repent - Will never change this purpose; it is perfectly without condition, and without contingency. Nothing is left here to the will of man or angel. Christ shall be incarnated, and the Gospel of his salvation shall be preached over the whole earth. This is an irresistible decree of that God who loves mankind.

Thou art a priest for ever - The word כהן cohen signifies, not only a priest, but also a prince; as, in the patriarchal times, most heads of families had and exercised both political and sacerdotal authority over all their descendants. Every priest had a threefold office:

1. He was an instructor of the family or tribe over which he presided.
2. He offered sacrifices for the sins of the people, to reconcile them to God, and give them access to his presence.
3. He was their mediator, and interceded for them. So is Christ, the grand, the universal Instructor, by his word and Spirit; the Lamb of God, who, by his sacrificial offering of himself, takes away the sin of the world, and still continues to exhibit himself before the throne in his sacrificial character; and also the great Mediator between God and man: and in these characters he is a Priest for ever. He will instruct, apply the sacrificial offering, and intercede for man, till time shall be no more.

After the order of Melchizedek - For the elucidation of this point, the reader is requested to refer to the notes on Gen 14:18, Gen 14:19, and to the observations at the end of that chapter, where the subject, relative to the person, name, and office of this ancient king, is fully discussed; and it will be necessary to read that note, etc., as if appended to this place.

Melchizedek was king of Salem, that is, king of Jerusalem; for Salem was its ancient name: but שלם salem signifies peace, and צדק tsedek, righteousness. Christ is styled the Prince of peace; and he is the king that rules in the empire of righteousness; and all peace and righteousness proceed from him, Heb 7:2.

He is priest after the order of Melchizedek - after his pattern; in the same kind or manner of way in which this ancient king was priest.

Calmet properly observes that there were three orders of priesthood.

1. That of royalty. All ancient kings being, in virtue of their office, priests also. This seems to have been considered as the natural right of royalty, as it obtained in almost every nation of the earth, from the beginning of the world down to the end of the Roman empire.
2. That of the first-born. This right appertained naturally to Reuben, as the first-born in the family of Jacob.
3. That of the Levites, instituted by God himself, and taken from Reuben, because of his transgression. The Levitical priesthood ended with the Jewish polity; and that also of the first-born, which had been absorbed in it.

This order, therefore, was not perpetual; it was intended to last only for a time. But that of royalty is perpetual, though not now in general use, because founded in what is called natural right. It is, therefore, according to this most ancient order, that Christ is a Priest for ever. The kings of England as heads of the Church appointing all bishops, continue to assume, in a certain way, this original right.

Melchizedek is said to be "without father without mother, without beginning of days, or end of life." We have no account of his parents; nothing of his birth; nothing of his death. Christ, as to his Divine nature, is without father or mother, and without beginning of days; nor can he have any end. Other priests could not continue by reason of death; but he is the Eternal, he cannot die, and therefore can have no successor: "He is a priest For Ever." Therefore, as Melchizedek was a priest and a king, and

had no successor, so shall Christ be: of the increase and government of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Melchizedek was priest of the Most High God; and consequently not of one people or nation, but of the universe. Aaron was priest of one people, and for a time only; Jesus is priest of all mankind, and for ever. He tasted death for every man; he is the King eternal; he has the keys of hell and of death. As God is the King and Governor of all human beings, Christ, being the priest of the Most High God, must also be the priest for and over all whom this most high God made and governs; and therefore he is the priest, the atoning sacrifice, of the whole human race. In this the main similitude consists between the order of Melchizedek and that of Christ.

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PSALM 110: 5 The Lord is at your right hand. He will crush kings in the day of his wrath.

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#### Verse 5

The Lord at thy right hand - Here Venema thinks the Psalm speaks of David. As Jesus is at the right hand of God, so he will be at thy hand, giving thee all the support and comfort requisite.

Shall strike through kings - As he did in the case of Abraham, Genesis 14:1-16, (for to this there seems to be an allusion), where he smote four kings, and filled the pits with the dead bodies of their troops. That the allusion is to the above transaction seems the most probable because in the same chapter, where the defeat of the four kings is mentioned, we have the account of Melehizedek coming to meet Abraham, and receiving the tenth of the spoils.

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PSALM 110: 6 He will judge among the nations. He will heap up dead bodies. He will crush the ruler of the whole earth.

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#### Verse 6

He shall judge among the heathen - David shall greatly extend his dominion, and rule over the Idumeans, Moabites, Philistines, etc.

He shall fill - with the dead bodies - He shall fill pits - make heaps of slain; there shall be an immense slaughter among his enemies.

He shall wound the heads - He shall so bring down the power of all the neighboring kings, as to cause them to acknowledge him as their lord, and pay him tribute.

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PSALM 110: 7 He will drink of the brook on the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

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#### Verse 7

He shall drink of the brook in the way - He shall have sore travail, and but little ease and refreshment: but he shall still go on from conquering to conquer.

Therefore shall he lift up the head - Or his head. He shall succeed in all his enterprises, and at last be peaceably settled in his ample dominions.

But these verses, as well as the former, may be applied to our Lord. The fifth verse may be an address to Jehovah: Adonai at thy right hand, O Jehovah, shall smite kings - bring down all powers hostile to his empire, in the day of his wrath - when, after having borne long, he arises and shakes terribly the rulers of the earth. Psa 110:6 He shall judge, give laws, among the heathen - send his Gospel to the whole Gentile world. He shall fill the field of battle with the dead bodies of the slain, who had resisted his empire, and would not have him to reign over them.

He shall wound the heads over many countries - This must be spoken against some person possessing a very extensive sway. Perhaps Antichrist is meant; he who has so many countries under his spiritual domination. Christ shall destroy every person, and every thing, which opposes the universal spread of his own empire. He will be a King, as well as a Priest for ever. Psa 110:7 He shall drink of the brook - he shall suffer sorely, and even die in the struggle: but in that death his enemies shall all perish; and he shall lift up the head - he shall rise again from the dead, possessing all power in heaven and earth, ascend to the throne of glory, and reign till time shall be no more. He must suffer and die, in order to have the triumphs already mentioned.

While all have acknowledged that this Psalm is of the utmost importance, and that it speaks of Christ's priesthood and victories, it is amazing how various the interpretations are which are given of different passages. I have endeavored to give the general sense in the preceding notes, and to explain all the particular expressions that have been thought most difficult: and by giving the various readings from the MSS., have left it to the learned reader to make farther improvements.

It has, however, long appeared to me that there is a key by which all the difficulties in the Psalm may be unlocked. As this has not been suggested by any other, as far as I know, I shall without apology lay it before the reader: -

The hundred and tenth Psalm is a War Song, and every phrase and term in it is Military.

1. In the first place may be considered here the proclamation of the Divine purpose relative to the sacerdotal, prophetic, and regal offices of the Lord Jesus Christ: "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My Right Hand."
2. A grievous battle, and consequent victory over the enemy, foretold: I Will Make Thine Enemies the Footstool to Thy Feet, Psa 110:1.
3. The ensign displayed: "The Lord Shall Send Forth the Rod of Thy Strength; the pole on which the banner shall be displayed, at the head of his strength - his numerous and powerful forces.
4. The inscription, device, or motto on this ensign: "Rule Thou in the Midst of Thine Enemies," Psa 110:2.
5. The muster of the troops. A host of bold spirited volunteers; not mercenaries, neither kidnapped nor impressed; but עַם נְדָבוֹת am nedaboth, a volunteer people; high-born, loyal subjects; veteran soldiers; every man bringing gifts to his General and King.
6. The regimentals or uniform in which they shall appear: "The Beauties of Holiness; הַדְרֵי קֹדֶשׁ hadrey kodesh, the splendid garments of holiness. The apparel showing the richness of the King, and the worth and order of the soldiers; every man being determined to do his duty, and feeling assured of conquest. The Lacedaemonian soldiers were clothed in scarlet; and never went to battle without crowns and garlands upon their heads, being always sure of victory. Potter's Ant., vol. ii., p. 55.



7. The number of the troops: They Shall Be As the Drops of Dew at Break of Day: - innumerable; and this shall be in consequence ילדתך yalduthecha, of thy nativity-the manifestation of Jesus. Thou shalt be born unto men; They shall be born of thy Spirit, Psa 110:3.

8. The title of the commander: "Thou Art a Priest," כהן cohen, a Priest and a Prince. So was Agamemnon in Homer, and Aeneas in Virgil. Both were princes; both were priests and both were heroes.

9. The perpetuity of this office: "For Ever;" לעולם leolam, for futurity - for all time - till the earth and the heavens are no more.

10. The resolution of setting up such a Priest and lying, and levying such an army: According to the Order of Melchizedek. The Commander, muster, and establishment of the corps shall be according to the plan of that ancient king and priest; or, translating the words literally, על דברתי מלכי צדק, al dabarti malki tsedek, all shall be executed as I have spoken to my righteous king; I have sworn, and will not change my purpose. All my purposes shall be fulfilled. This speaking may refer to the purpose, Psa 110:1, confirmed by an oath, Psa 110:4.

11. Victory gained: Adonai at Thy Right Hand Hath Transfixed (מחץ machats) Kings in the Day of His Wrath, i.e., of battle and victory. Jesus, the Almighty King and Conqueror, fights and gains his battles, while sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, Psa 110:5.

12. Judgment instituted and executed: "He Shall Judge Among the Heathen," בגים baggoyim, among the nations. He shall bring forth, judge, and condemn his enemies; and he shall fill pits with the bodies of executed criminals, Psa 110:6.

13. False religion, supporting itself by the secular arm under the name of true religion, shall be destroyed. מחץ ראש על ארץ רבה machats rosh al erets rabbah; "He smites the head that is over an extensive land" or country. The priesthood that is not according to the order of Melchizedek shall be destroyed; and all government that is not according to him who is the eternal King and Priest, shall be brought down and annihilated. Who is this great Head? this usurping power? this antichristian authority? Let the Italian archbishop answer, Psa 110:6.

14. Refreshment and rest, the fruits of the victories which have been gained: "He Shall Drink of the Brook in the Way; Therefore, Shall He Lift Up the Head." He and his victorious army, having defeated and pursued his enemies, and being spent with fatigue and thirst, are refreshed by drinking from a rivulet providentially met with in the way. But the rout being now complete and final,

15. The emperor is proclaimed and triumphs: God lifts up the Head, - ראש rosh, the Chief, the Captain; as the word often means. Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, has a complete triumph; eternal peace and tranquillity are established. The Messiah is all in all - the last enemy, Death, is destroyed. Jesus, having overcome, has sat down with the Father upon his throne; and his soldiers, having also overcome through the blood of the Lamb, seated with him on the same throne, are for ever with the Lord. They see him as he is; and eternally contemplate and enjoy his glory: - "Far from a world of grief and sin,

With God eternally shut in."

Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Amen, Amen.