

PSALM 35

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 35

[A Psalm] of David

This psalm seems to have been written by David, when he was persecuted by Saul; and when many false charges were brought against him by his courtiers; and when he was the scorn and derision of the people; the subject of it is pretty much of the same kind with the seventh psalm, and might be written about the same time that was, and on the same occasion; and it may be applied to the church and people of God in like cases. There is a passage in it, (^{<48519>}Psalm 35:19), which our Lord seems to refer to and apply to himself, (^{<48155>}John 15:25); and some interpret the whole of it concerning him. The Arabic version calls it a prophecy of the incarnation; though there does not appear any thing in it applicable to that.

Ver. 1. *Plead [my cause], O Lord, with them that strive with me,* etc.] Meaning Saul and his courtiers; concerning whom he elsewhere desires that the Lord would judge between them, plead his cause, and deliver him; as he accordingly did, and maintained it, and the righteousness of it, (^{<48242>}1 Samuel 24:12-15 ^{<48155>}Psalm 9:4). So Christ pleaded not his own cause as man, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously; and his people leave their cause with him, who is their advocate, and is able to plead it thoroughly; and does plead it against wicked and ungodly men, who unrighteously charge them; against Satan the accuser of the brethren, who stands at their right hand to resist them; and against their own hearts, and the sins of them, which lust and war against them, and condemn them;

fight against them that fight against me: so the Lord is sometimes represented as a man of war, and Christ as a warrior fighting for the saints; and safe are they on whose side he is; but miserable all such who are found fighters against him and his; for none ever opposed him and prospered.

Ver. 2. *Take hold of shield and buckler,* etc.] Defensive weapons; not that the Lord stands in need of any of these to defend himself with: but the sense is, that he would be as these to David; as he was to him, and is to all his people; namely, their shield and buckler: he gives unto them the shield

of salvation; he encompasses them about with his favour as with a shield, and keeps them by his power safe from all their enemies;

and stand up for mine help; for which the Lord arises, and stands by his people, and against their enemies, delivering them out of their hands.

Ver. 3. *Draw out also the spear*, etc.] An offensive weapon; expressive of the vengeance which God sometimes takes of the enemies of his people, when he bends his bow, shoots his arrows, whets his glittering sword, and his hand takes hold of judgment;

and stop [the way] against them that persecute me; that they might not overtake him; God can hinder, and he sometimes does hinder persecutors from overtaking his people in their straits; and as he hedges up their way with thorns, that they cannot proceed as they have begun, so he hedges up the way of their enemies; interposes himself and his power, and is a wall of fire about them; a wall for the defence and security of his saints, and a wall of fire for the consumption of those that rise up against them. The words may be rendered, “draw out the spear and sword, to meet those that persecute me”^{f497}; for *rygs* is a noun, and signifies a sword shut up in its scabbard; from whence “sagaris” comes, which is kind of a sword;

say unto my soul, I [am] thy salvation; Christ is the salvation of his people; he is the only person appointed, provided, promised, and sent to be the Saviour; and he is the alone author of salvation it is wrought out by him, and it is in him, and in him only; and therefore he is called their salvation, and the salvation of God: and they are interested in the salvation which is in him; it was designed, prepared, and wrought out for them, and for them only; and is applied unto them by the Spirit, and they shall perfectly enjoy it to all eternity: find yet sometimes they are at a loss about their interest in it, and desire might be made known unto them, which was the case of the psalmist here; they, as he, see their necessity it, and that there is no comfort nor safety without it they are wonderfully delighted with the excellency of it, that it is so great in itself, so suitable to them, so complete and perfect, and of an everlasting duration yet, what through the hidings of God’s face, the temptations of Satan, the greatness of their sins, and the prevalence of unbelief, they cannot tell how to believe their interest in it; yet most earnestly desire the Lord would show it to them, and assure them of it; which favour, when granted, is by the witnessings of the Spirit to their spirits, that they are the children of God, and the redeemed of the Lamb:

and this is said particularly to them; it is not a discovery of salvation by Christ in general; that they have before; but it is a saying to their souls, that it is theirs; and when this is spoken bathe to the soul by the Spirit of God, it is effectual; and removes unbelief at once, and fills with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Ver. 4. *Let them be confounded, and put to shame, that seek after my soul,* etc.] This petition, and what follows, which seem to be by way of imprecation, are to be considered as prophecies of what would be, and as expressions of faith that so it should be; and are not to be drawn into examples, and to be imitated by private persons; nor are they contrary to those evangelical rules, which require men to love their enemies, and pray for them; to give place to wrath, and not meditate vengeance, nor take it: and so it was with David's enemies. Saul, who hunted after his soul or life, to take it away, was filled with shame and confusion, when David, having cut off the skirt of his garment, held it up to him; by which he was convinced that his life was in his hands, and he did not take it away, though he was seeking after his: and so it will fare with the enemies of Christ, the Jews; who sought to take away his life and did take it away, when they shall see him come in the clouds of heaven, whom they have pierced; and in like manner will it be with the enemies of all his people, whom nothing will content but their lives, when they shall see the lambs they have worried and butchered on Christ's right hand, and they on the left; and to the sheep said, Come, ye blessed; and to them, Go, ye cursed, (^{<12534>}Matthew 25:34,41);

let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt; as Saul did David's, even when he made the most specious show of affection and respect unto him, as well as when he more openly persecuted him; and more than once was he turned back with shame, and departed home; (see ^{<1222>}1 Samuel 24:22 26:25). The Jews, that came to apprehend Christ, together with the Roman soldiers, and who had devised and intended his hurt, went backward, and fell to the ground with shame and confusion, when, having asked them who they sought, and they had replied, told them he was the person; and how often has it been, that when wicked men have devised, deceitful matters against the members of Christ, that their counsel has been carried headlong, they have not been able to perform their enterprises; a hook has been put into their nose, and a bridle in their jaws, and they have been turned back the way they came, with shame and disgrace.

Ver. 5. *Let them be as chaff before the wind*, etc.] As they are; (see ^{<4004>}Psalm 1:4);

and let the angel of the Lord chase [them]; either a good angel, who is the Lord's, his creature that ministers unto him, and is ready to obey his orders; and who, as he encamps about the saints and protects them, so he is able to destroy their enemies; as one angel in a night destroyed all the firstborn in Egypt, and another the whole army of the Assyrians, (^{<0129>}Exodus 12:29 ^{<2935>}2 Kings 19:35); an angel of the Lord, who is swift to fly, and so to chase and overtake, and able to execute whatever is the will of the Lord; or else an evil angel, who is the Lord's, being made by him, though not made evil by him; and who is under his restraints, and can do nothing but by his permission; and who sometimes is employed by the Lord, as the executioner of his wrath upon wicked men; is suffered to distress and torture their consciences in this life, and hereafter drag them into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Ver. 6. *Let their way be dark and slippery*, etc.] In which they run before the angel, chasing and pursuing them; so that they know not where they are, at what they stumble, whither to flee, nor how to stand; the ways of wicked men are as darkness, they know not in what condition they are, and whither they are going; and utter darkness, even blackness of darkness, is reserved for them: but here it means a calamitous, uncomfortable, fickle, and unstable situation in this life; (see ^{<4231>}Jeremiah 23:11,12). The allusion is to some of the valleys in the land of Palestine, which were dark, and the roads in them very smooth and slippery, as travellers in those parts have observed ^{f498};

and let the angel of God persecute them; (see Gill on "^{<4985>}Psalm 35:5").

Ver. 7. *For without cause have they hid for me their net [in] a pit*, etc.] This is said in allusion to the custom of digging pits, and putting nets into them, for the catching of wild beasts; and covering them with straw or dust, or such like things, as Jarchi observes, that they might not be discerned; and which intends the secret and crafty methods taken by David's enemies to ensnare him and destroy him; though he had given them no cause to use him in such a manner; which is an aggravation of their sins, and a reason of the above imprecations, as well as of what follows: and in the same manner, and without any just cause, Christ and his members have been treated by wicked men, and therefore their damnation is just, and will be inevitable:

[which] without cause they have digged for my soul; which is added for further explanation's sake, and to aggravate their sin, and to show the justness of their punishment.

Ver. 8. *Let destruction come upon him at unawares*, etc.] Or a “storm”^{f499}, such as is caused in the eastern countries by a south wind, very sudden, violent, and destructive^{f500}: the singular number being here used, some Jewish commentators, as Kimchi, have thought Saul is particularly meant; and some Christian interpreters have been of opinion that Judas is intended: the imprecations here may be compared with those which respect him, (^{<19496>}Psalm 109:6-8). Though this may regard every one of the enemies of David, or of Christ and his people, whose ruin and destruction will come upon them unawares; (see ^{<19187>}1 Thessalonians 5:3 ^{<16807>}Revelation 18:7,8);

and let his net that he hath laid catch himself; a figurative expression, agreeable to the allusion before made, and which is explained in the next clause;

into that very destruction let him fall, which he had designed and contrived for others; so Haman was hanged on the same gallows he had prepared for Mordecai; and so it often is in the course of Providence, that the wicked fall into the same calamity they have intended and endeavoured to bring others into; (see ^{<19715>}Psalm 7:15,16 9:15,16).

Ver. 9. *And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord*, etc.] Not in the destruction of his enemies, but in the God of his salvation; the Targum is, “in the Word of the Lord”; the essential Word of God, the promised Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer. Christ is the object of a believer's joy; he rejoices in his person, as he is the mighty God, able to save him, and to keep what he has committed to him, and to preserve him from falling; as he is God and man in one person, and so fit to be a Mediator between God and man; and as he is a Prophet to instruct him, a Priest to expiate his sin and make intercession for him, and as a King to rule over, protect, and defend him; and as he stands in the relations of a father, husband, brother, and friend: he rejoices in what he has done and is doing; in that this Word is made flesh, and has obtained eternal redemption, and now appears in the presence of God, as an advocate and intercessor: it follows,

it shall rejoice in his salvation; that which Jehovah the Father has determined upon, provided for, and has formed the scheme of; that which Jehovah the Son undertook to accomplish, and now has finished; and that

which Jehovah the Spirit had made a discovery and application of unto the psalmist, in answer to his request in (^{}Psalm 35:3). This filled him with so much joy, as it does every believer that has a view of interest in it; seeing hereby the law is fulfilled, justice is satisfied, sin is atoned for, the pardon of it is procured, an everlasting righteousness is brought in, and a solid foundation laid for hope of eternal glory and happiness.

Ver. 10. *All my bones shall say*, etc.] So, in a figurative sense, vexation and inquietude are ascribed to the bones, (^{}Psalm 6:2 38:3); and sometimes joy and gladness, (^{}Psalm 51:8). His soul is said to rejoice in (^{}Psalm 35:9); and here his bones are said to show forth the praises of the Lord; and both together design the whole man, as heart and flesh in (^{}Psalm 84:2); and the bones being the strength of the body may denote his saying what follows, with all his might, and with all his strength, and with the utmost fervency of spirit:

Lord, who [is] like unto thee; on account of the perfections of his nature, which appear in the salvation and deliverance of his people: there is none like unto him for his wisdom, holiness, power, grace, and mercy; for his foreknowledge, wisdom, and counsel, in forming the scheme of salvation; for his holiness and justice, which are glorified by it; for his might and power in effecting it; and for his grace, mercy, goodness, and faithfulness shown in keeping covenant with his people, in pardoning and passing by their iniquity and transgression, and in condescending to take notice of his poor and needy, to deliver them, as follows; (see ^{}Psalm 113:5-8);

which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him: yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him? in which words the psalmist doubtless respects himself and his own case, who was poor and afflicted, and stood in need of help when he was persecuted by Saul, who was his enemy, too strong for him, and who sought to spoil and ruin him, but the Lord delivered him out of his hands; (see ^{}Psalm 18:17). They agree with the case of all the Lord's poor and needy, who are so not only in a temporal sense, as they commonly be; and in such sense as all mankind are, though everyone is not sensible of his spiritual poverty through sin; having neither food nor raiment, nor anything to procure them with, and yet think themselves rich and increased with goods; but in the best sense, being poor in spirit and rich in faith; these have enemies stronger than they. Sin is sometimes represented as a person, their antagonist that fights against them, wars with them, prevails over them sometimes, and carries

them captive: sin is too strong for a man without the grace of God; nay, it was too strong for Adam in innocence, and spoiled him of the image of God, stripped him of his righteousness, and marred all the glory and honour in which he was; and it is too strong for a man that has the grace of God, when left to himself: but the Lord delivers his people from it; they; are redeemed from it, and saved from punishment for it by the blood of Christ; and they are freed from the power and dominion of it, by the Spirit and grace of Christ at conversion, and at death they are delivered from the being of it. Satan is the strong man armed, and is more than a match for the poor and needy; but Christ the mighty God is stronger than he, and has ransomed them out of the hands of him that was stronger than they; and the prey, or they that were made a spoil by him, are taken out of the hands of the mighty, and the lawful captive is delivered: they are, indeed, assaulted by his temptations, in which he would be too many for them, but that they are strengthened against him by the Lord, and are enabled to withstand him; who, in the issue, flees from them; nor can he do as he pleases with them, nor reassume his power over them he once had, nor lead them captive at his will as he once did: God is on their side, Christ is their patron and defender, that pleads their cause against him; the Spirit that is within them is greater than he that is in the world; angels are all around them, and in a little while these poor and needy will be in heaven, and out of his reach, and so of every oppressor and persecutor; now they are the weak things of this world, and their enemies are the mighty ones, and too strong for them, who spoil them of their good name and character, and sometimes of their goods and property; but the Lord does and will deliver them out of their hands, and enter them into rest, where the wicked cease from troubling.

Ver. 11. *False witnesses did rise up*, etc.] Against David, saying he sought the hurt of Saul, (⁽⁴²⁴⁾1 Samuel 24:9), as did against David's antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, (⁽⁴²⁵⁾Matthew 26:59-61); and against his apostles, (⁽⁴²⁶⁾Acts 24:5,6); and very frequently do they rise up and bear false witness against his people, which is a very heinous crime;

they laid to my charge [things] that I knew not: such as David was not conscious of, never thought of doing, much less attempted to do; as the taking away of Saul's life, the contrary of which appeared by his cutting off his skirt only when he was in his hands, and taking away his spear from his bolster when he could have taken off his head; and such were the things laid to the charge of the Messiah, David's son, who knew no sin, nor did

any; and the like are exhibited against his members, who go through good report and bad report, and whose good conversation is falsely accused by malicious men.

Ver. 12. *They rewarded me evil for good*, etc.] For the good David did in killing Goliath, and slaying his ten thousands of the Philistines, and thereby saving his king and country, Saul and his courtiers envied him, and sought to slay him: so our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the good he did to the Jews, by healing their bodies of diseases, and preaching the Gospel to them for the benefit of their souls, was rewarded with reproaches and persecutions, and at last with the shameful death of the cross; and in like manner are his people used; but this is an evil that shall not go unpunished; (see ^{<0173>}Proverbs 17:13). It is added,

[to] the spoiling of my soul; or “to the bereaving of it” ^{f501}; causing it to be fatherless; that is, to the bereaving it of its joy, peace, and comfort; so fatherless is put for comfortless, (^{<0418>}John 14:18); or to the taking away of his soul, which being separated from the body, its companion is left alone, as one that is fatherless.

Ver. 13. *But as for me, when they were sick*, etc.] Or under any disorder or distress of body or mind, when any misfortune or infirmity attended them; meaning Saul and his courtiers, before David was persecuted by them;

my clothing [was] sackcloth; that is, he was grieved, and mourned for them, it being usual to put on sackcloth in time of mourning; (see ^{<0534>}Genesis 37:34);

I humbled my soul with fasting; on the account of them, giving up himself to prayer for them, as follows:

and my prayer returned into mine own bosom; that is, he prayed privately and heartily for them, as for himself; he was constant in it, his heart was in it, and he took delight in it, and he was heard and answered; unless the sense should be, that his prayer was slighted by them, and so returned back to himself, as a present despised is returned; but however it was not without its effect, the good for which he prayed for them was returned by the Lord unto him.

Ver. 14. *I behaved myself as though [he had been] my friend [or] brother*, etc.] Meaning either Saul or Doeg the Edomite, or some such evil man; somewhat like this he says of Ahithophel, (^{<0910>}Psalm 41:9 55:13); and

Arama thinks he is meant here; as Christ of Judas, whom he called friend, when he came to betray him; and who not only ate with him at table of his bread, but was steward of his family, and carried the bag, (⁴¹⁵⁰Matthew 26:50 ⁴¹⁵¹John 13:29);

I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth [for his] mother; or as a mother that mourneth for her son, as Jarchi interprets it, whose affections are very strong; and thus Christ wept over Jerusalem, and had a tender concern for and sympathy with the Jews, his implacable enemies, and wept over them, and prayed for them, (⁴²⁹⁴Luke 19:41 ⁴²⁵⁷Matthew 23:37) (⁴²³⁴Luke 23:34).

Ver. 15. *But in mine adversity they rejoiced*, etc.] Or “at my halting”^{f502}, either by means of falling into sin; good men are subject to slips and falls, and that to the dislocating or breaking of their bones, which cause them to go halting all their days; wicked men watch for their halting, as Jeremiah’s familiars did for his, (⁴³¹⁰Jeremiah 20:10); and rejoice at it; (see ⁴³³⁶Psalm 38:16,17); or by falling into some misfortune or calamity; hence we render it “adversity”, and may design some affliction or other, as in (⁴³⁰⁶Micah 4:6 ⁴³¹⁹Zephaniah 3:19), at which wicked men rejoice; (see ⁴³⁵⁵Ezekiel 35:15); so David’s enemies rejoiced at his afflictions; and the enemies of his son and antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, were glad when Judas offered to betray him to them; more so when they had got him into their hands; and most of all when he was condemned and crucified: and so do the enemies of his people, as the Philistines sported with Samson when he was in his adversity, and as the antichristian party will rejoice and send gifts one to another when the two witnesses are slain; but the saints have a gracious God, who knows their souls in adversity; a sympathizing high priest, who is touched with a feeling of their infirmities; and fellow saints that are afflicted with them in all their afflictions, and bear a part of their burdens;

and gathered themselves together; not to pity him, but to insult him; not to help him in his distress, but to add to it;

[yea], the objects gathered themselves together against me; mean persons, the refuse and scum of the earth; such as Job describes, (⁴³³⁰Job 30:1-8); the word may be rendered “smitten”^{f503}, either in spirit, as in (⁴³⁴²Isaiah 66:2); they pretending sorrow of heart for his troubles; or rather smitten in body, in their feet, as Mephibosheth was; yet as lame as they were, and notwithstanding their lameness, they got together to rejoice at David’s halting: or it may be best of all to understand it of their being smitten of

God and afflicted; and the sense may be, that though the hand of God was upon them, this did not deter them from gathering together to insult David in his afflictions; some render the word “smiters”^{f504}, that is, with their tongues, and so the Targum, “the wicked who smite with their words”; (see ^{<24818>}Jeremiah 18:18); and such sort of persons were they that gathered together against Christ: it is true indeed that some of them were men of rank and figure, were the princes of this world, as Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the Jewish rulers, (^{<4027>}Acts 4:27,28), compared with (^{<3901>}Psalm 2:1,2); but the greater part of them were the meaner sort of people; particularly the Roman soldiers that gathered about him, and sported with him in Pilate’s hall, and that surrounded him with scoffs when upon the cross; these also were literally “smiters” of him, both with words and with their hands, and are so called, (^{<2816>}Isaiah 50:6);

and I knew [it] not; David knew his enemies, or he could not have shown so much concern for them, as he did in the preceding verses; but either he knew not of their gathering together against him; until he saw them in great numbers about him; or he was not conscious to himself of any evil he had done them, that should be the reason of it; and this was the case of his son the Messiah, he who they were that gathered about him, even those that blindfolded him, and bid him prophesy who smote him; but he knew no sin he had done why he should be treated in the manner he was;

they did tear [me], and ceased not; not their own garments, as some supply it, pretending great grief of heart for him; nor their mouth with laughing at him, as others; (see ^{<4951>}Psalm 35:21); but either his character and reputation, with hard sayings and reproachful words, or his flesh with blows; and this they did incessantly; and which was literally true of Christ, whose enemies tore his flesh, by plucking off the hair, by buffeting and scourging him, and by piercing his hands and his feet with nails, when they crucified him; and they ceased not, even after death, to pierce his side with a spear.

Ver. 16. *With hypocritical mockers in feasts*, etc.] That is, the objects gathered, themselves together with such; these may design Saul’s courtiers, his parasites and flatterers, and who were hypocrites in religion also, and made it their business at Saul’s table, and in their banquetings and revellings, to mock at David; and who were “hypocritical mockers of” or “for a piece of bread”^{f505}, as it may be rendered; the same word is used for a pastry, or cake, and for flatterers; and they used at their feasts to throw a

pastry baked with honey to parasites ^{f506}, for the word gw [m signifies a cake, or a piece of bread, (<1172>1 Kings 17:12); and the sense may be, that they mocked at David as wanting a piece of bread, and that he had brought himself to one; or else those, and they that gathered with them especially, mocked at David for the sake of a meal; or for a piece of bread; (see <107>Proverbs 28:27); and such sort of men were the enemies of Christ, the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites to God, flatterers of men, who loved feasts, and the uppermost places there, and whose god was their belly; and who were mockers of Christ, derided his doctrine, and scoffed at his person, especially when he hung upon the cross;

they gnashed upon me with their teeth; in indignation and contempt; as Stephen's enemies did on him, (<4054>Acts 7:54).

Ver. 17. *Lord, how long wilt thou look on?* etc.] And behold these injuries and insults, and not arise to help and save? The psalmist firmly believed the omniscience of God, and was well assured he saw all that was done; but he was ready to consider him only as a spectator; or, however, seems impatient until he arose and showed himself strong on his behalf; (see <1072>Psalm 35:22,23);

rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions; his "soul" and his "darling" mean the same; either his life, than which nothing is dearer to a man; or his soul, his more noble part, and which was now "alone", or solitary, as the word ^{f507} used signifies; being forsaken of God and men, and was desolate and afflicted, as it is rendered (<1056>Psalm 25:16); or his whole person, which was among men comparable to lions, for their strength and savageness, who breathed out nothing but cruelty and destruction; from which he desires he might be rescued, or returned to the quiet possession of his own house, and the house of God: the words are much the same with those of the Messiah, (see Gill on "<1021>Psalm 22:20, 21").

Ver. 18. *I will give thee thanks in the great congregation*, etc.] This is the resolution the psalmist came unto; the promise he made, that should he be delivered from his enemies, he would give God thanks in the most public manner; that is, he would acknowledge God to be the author of the mercy, and himself unworthy of it; and would ascribe glory, honour, blessing, and thanksgiving to him, in the midst of the church and people of God; they

joining with him in it, when he should be restored to an attendance with them he before prays for;

I will praise thee among much people; meaning the same as before, the people of God meeting together for solemn worship; the great congregation of all, and the much people, will be the saints in heaven, when they shall be gathered together, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. The words will bear to be applied to the Messiah, (see ^{<4922>}Psalm 22:22).

Ver. 19. *Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me,* etc.] The word “wrongfully” is to be joined not to the word “rejoice”, but to the word “enemies”; and the sense is, that they were his enemies wrongfully, for false reasons, unjust causes, or without any cause that was just; as follows;

[neither] let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause; such were David’s enemies, particularly Saul, (^{<4904>}Psalm 7:4); and such were the enemies of Christ: this last clause is thought to be referred to by him, and applied to himself, (^{<4855>}John 15:25); and the whole of this is said him and by him, (^{<4804>}Psalm 69:4); see also (^{<4903>}Psalm 109:3-5). These were the Jews, of whom he came, among whom he was, and who had no reason to be his enemies, and to hate him; since he was harmless and inoffensive in his life and conversation among them; went about doing a great deal of good to them, both for soul and body, and always expressed the most tender concern for them: they had reasons for their hatred and rejection of him, but not justifiable ones; such as the meanness of his person and state in their view, the doctrines he preached relating to his deity, divine sonship, and the distinguishing grace of God; and his inveighing against the sins and vices which prevailed among them; and such are the enemies of his people, who hate them, though they are the quiet in the land, as is said in (^{<4850>}Psalm 35:20); and are harmless and inoffensive in their behaviour towards men: these are hated for Christ’s sake; and because he has chosen and called them out of the world; and because of their principles, which are distinguishing, and their practices, which are good: now the psalmist entreats that such might not be suffered to go on rejoicing over him, and at his calamities, but that he might be delivered out of all troubles, and out of their hands; and that they might not have any reason to wink with their eyes in a scornful and deriding way to him, and as expressing their pleasure to one another at his distresses; (see ^{<4012>}Proverbs 1:12,13 10:10).

Ver. 20. *For they speak not peace*, etc.] Meaning to himself, or any good man; as Joseph's brethren could not to him, (^{<0504>}Genesis 37:4); such were the men David had to do with, (^{<0C06>}Psalms 120:6,7); and such were the enemies of Christ, who could not give him a good word, nor speak one to him, (^{<050B>}John 10:20); and such are the enemies of his people, who breathe out nothing but threatenings and slaughter, and not anything that tends to peace, to promote and maintain it. Some versions, as the Septuagint, and they that follow that, render it, "they do speak peace to me"; but then it was in an hypocritical way, as in (^{<050B>}Psalms 28:3); and as the Jews did to Christ, (^{<0216>}Matthew 22:16,17); for it follows:

but they devise deceitful matters against [them that are] quiet in the land; meaning not the wicked, as Kimchi thinks; the rich, who live at ease and in quietness, having as much as heart can wish, "with" whom, as he renders it, David's enemies devised mischief in a deceitful way; but the righteous of the earth, as the Targum; such as David and his men were, who desired to live peaceable and quiet lives under Saul's government; and had no intention to disturb his government, or wrest the crown from him; and as the Messiah, David's son, was, "the humble one in the earth"; as the Arabic version renders it in the singular number; a character that well agrees with Christ, who showed great humility in coming into this world, and during his stay in it; it was a state of humiliation with him, and in which he behaved in the most lowly and humble manner; he was the quiet one in the land; he strove not, nor cried, nor was his voice heard in the street; he was not noisy and clamorous, quarrelsome and litigious; but all the reverse; he bore all insults, reproaches, and sufferings, patiently and quietly: and such are his people, so far as they are influenced by his grace and Spirit; they are quiet and peaceable in kingdoms, cities, and neighbourhoods, and in the churches of God; and yet the wicked are continually plotting against them, and devising things, to their hurt.

Ver. 21. *Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me*, etc.] In laughter, scorn, and derision; (see ^{<0217>}Psalms 22:7,8);

[and] said, Aha, aha: a word expressive of joy; and the doubling it shows the greatness of it;

our eye hath seen [it]; what their heart wished for; namely, the distress of him, whose enemies they were.

Ver. 22. [*This thou hast seen, O Lord*, etc.] The insults and derisions of these men, and the injuries they did to him, whom they hated. God is omniscient, and sees all things, all the evil wicked men do to him; and he will requite them in his own time; (see ^{<39104>}Psalm 10:14);

keep not silence; meaning at his prayers; that he would not be as one deaf and dumb, turning his ears from his cries, and giving no answer to his requests; (see ^{<49201>}Psalm 28:1 22:2);

O Lord, be not far from me; meaning not as to his general presence, in which sense he is not far from any, (Acts 17:07); but with respect to his gracious presence and appearance to him for help and deliverance; (see ^{<49201>}Psalm 22:1).

Ver. 23. *Stir up thyself and awake*, etc.] Who seemed to be asleep in the apprehensions of the psalmist, and to take no notice of his distresses, and the insults of his enemies; (see ^{<49423>}Psalm 44:23); he adds,

to my judgment, [even] to my cause; that is, to plead it and maintain it, and avenge him of his enemies, as in (^{<49301>}Psalm 35:1); making use of his covenant interest in him as a plea for it to engage him to do it, saying,

my God, and my Lord; (see ^{<49201>}Psalm 22:1).

Ver. 24. *Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness*, etc.] Either that righteousness of his, by which he justifies his people, which Christ has wrought out, God has accepted of, and imputes; and which, though revealed in the Gospel, was witnessed to by the law and prophets, and was known to the saints under the Old Testament, and particularly to David; (see ^{<49016>}Romans 4:6); or the perfection of his justice, his essential righteousness displayed in all his works and actions, and in the government of the world; according to this the psalmist desired to be judged; not with respect to his person before God, but with respect to his cause before men, by delivering him from his enemies, and taking vengeance on them: thus Christ also was judged according to the strict justice or righteousness of God; for as sin was righteously condemned in his flesh, being imputed to him, and found upon him; so he was, according to the justice of God, acquitted, discharged, and justified in the Spirit, when he arose from the dead; and afterwards righteous judgment was executed on his enemies the Jews, when wrath came upon them to the uttermost: and his people are also dealt with according to the righteousness of God; who acts as a righteous God, as just and faithful in forgiving their sins, on account of the

blood of Christ being shed for it; and in justifying their persons by his righteousness, and by giving them the crown of righteousness laid up for them; and at last by rendering tribulation to them that have troubled them;

and let them not rejoice over me; meaning his enemies, as in (^{<19515>}Psalm 35:15,19); that is, let them not go on to rejoice; let them have no occasion for it, but deliver me out of their hands.

Ver. 25. *Let them not say in their hearts, ah, so would we have it*, etc.] Or we have what our souls wished for and desired: the sense of the petition is the same with (^{<19272>}Psalm 27:12);

let them not say, we have swallowed him up; as roaring lions swallow down their prey, to which he had compared them, (^{<19517>}Psalm 35:17); and as wicked men eat up the Lord's people as they eat bread, (^{<19404>}Psalm 14:4).

Ver. 26. *Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together*, etc.] In a body, as one man; as they gathered together against him, (^{<19515>}Psalm 35:15); so he entreats they might together be brought to shame and confusion, they not being able to execute their designs; their schemes being broken, their counsels defeated, and they exposed to contempt;

that rejoice at mine hurt; the same with his adversity, or halting, (^{<19515>}Psalm 35:15);

let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify [themselves] against me; let them be covered with it, as a man is with a garment; who magnified themselves, opened their mouths in great swelling words of vanity against him, vaunted and bragged over him, as in their power, and at their will.

Ver. 27. *Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause*, etc.] The cause of David was a righteous cause, he having done no iniquity, or anything criminal against Saul his enemy, who persecuted him; and there were some that favoured his cause, as Jonathan, Saul's son, and a few others of rank and figure; but the greatest part were mean and despicable, (^{<19272>}1 Samuel 22:2); and so the cause of Christ and of his people, which is one, is a righteous cause, which no one need to be ashamed of, and is worth suffering for; though those that favour it are for the most part the poor and base and weak things of the world: but when this cause prospers they rejoice and are glad, as they do at the happiness of

every particular saint; for if one member is honoured, all the rest rejoice with it;

yea, let them say continually, the Lord be magnified; let them continually ascribe greatness, give honour and glory, to him,

which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant; meaning either himself, who was a servant of the Lord, not only by creation, but by grace; and who had his times both of temporal and spiritual prosperity; which were owing to the good will and pleasure of God, and to the delight and complacency he had in him, being a man after his own heart, raised up to fulfil his will; and since this prosperity did not arise from any desert of his, he would have all the glory of it given to God: or else he intends the Messiah, his antitype, who, as Mediator, is the servant of the Lord; of his choosing, calling, and sending; whose commands he diligently and faithfully obeyed; from whom he had his work, and also his reward: his prosperity lies in the work of redemption succeeding in his hands; in his exaltation at the right hand of God; and in the spread of his Gospel in the world, and the efficacy of it to the conviction of sinners; and in the establishment and increase of his kingdom and interest; on which account the Lord's name is to be magnified and glorified, who delights in him as his servant, and in his prosperity; and the rather this is to be done, since the saints have an interest in him as a Prince and a Saviour: or anyone of the servants of the Lord may be understood; or however it is applicable to anyone of them, who, through the power of divine grace upon them, are made willing to serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear; who are his Hephzibah, in whom is all his delight and pleasure, (²³⁶¹⁴Isaiah 62:4); who rejoices over them to do them good: and hence flows all the spiritual prosperity they enjoy, on account of which glory is to be given to God by them and all the saints that know it, (¹⁹⁸¹⁰Psalm 34:1,2).

Ver. 28. *And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness*, etc.] In vindicating his cause, and bringing his enemies to shame and confusion, as well as of the glory and excellency of that righteousness of his, by which he was justified in his sight, and from whence his inward peace and prosperity flowed:

[and] of thy praise all the day long; for the many mercies, temporal and spiritual, he was every day favoured with.