

PSALM 68

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 68

To the chief Musician, A Psalm [or] Song of David

The Targum makes the argument of this psalm to be the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; in which it is followed by many of the Jewish interpreters: but Aben Ezra rejects such an interpretation of it, and thinks that David composed it, concerning the war he had with the uncircumcised nations, the Philistines and others, (^{<1081>}2 Samuel 8:1), etc. And so the title of the Syriac version begins,

“a psalm of David, when the kings prepared themselves to fight against him:”

and Kimchi says it was composed on account of Sennacherib’s army coming against Jerusalem, in the times of Hezekiah, and so delivered by David, under a spirit of prophecy concerning that affair; though he owns that some of their writers interpret it of the war of Gog and Magog, in the times of the Messiah they yet expect. But they are much nearer the truth, who take it that it was written on occasion of the ark being brought to the city of David; seeing it begins with much the same words that Moses used when the ark set forward in his times, (^{<1085>}Numbers 10:35); and the bringing of which was attended with great joy and gladness, (^{<1064>}2 Samuel 6:14,15); such as the righteous are called upon to express in this psalm, (^{<1083>}Psalm 68:3,4). And this being a type of Christ, and of his ascending the holy hill of God, may be allowed of; for certain it is that this psalm treats of the coming of Christ, and of blessings by him, and of victory over his enemies; and particularly of his ascension to heaven, as most evidently appears from (^{<1003>}Ephesians 4:8,9); and from prophecies in it, concerning the calling of the Gentiles. Wherefore the latter part of the Syriac inscription of it is very pertinent;

“also a prophecy concerning the dispensation of the Messiah, and concerning the calling of the Gentiles to the faith.”

Jarchi interprets (^{<988>}Psalm 68:31) of the Messiah.

Ver. 1. *Let God arise*, etc.] Which, as Kimchi observes, is either by way of prayer, or by way of prophecy; and in either way the sense is the same: for, if it is considered as a prayer, it is a prayer of faith that so it would be; or, if as a prophecy, it is certain that so it should be. And this is to be understood of the same divine Person, whose chariots the angels are; who is said to be the “Adonai”, or “Lord” in the midst of them; and of whom it is prophesied that he should ascend to heaven, (^{<987>}Psalm 68:17,18); even the Messiah, who is God over all. And this “arising”, attributed to him, may be interpreted either of his incarnation, his exhibition and manifestation in the flesh; which is sometimes called in Scripture a raising of him up, as in (^{<403>}Acts 3:26 13:23); or of his resurrection from the dead, as it is interpreted by many of the ancients; which, as it was a certain thing, and previous to his ascension hereafter spoken of, so it was a proof of his deity; for though it was only the man that rose, who died and was buried, yet as in union with the divine Person of the Son of God, and who rose by virtue of that union; and thereby he was declared to be the Son of God with power. Or else rather this is to be understood of his arising and exerting his power as a man of war, as a mighty and victorious hero, on the behalf of his people, and against his enemies; as he did when he arose and met Satan, the prince of the world, and engaged with all the powers of darkness; (see ^{<983>}Psalm 45:3,4 ^{<940>}John 14:30,31); and this sense is confirmed by what follows:

let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him: the sense of these two clauses is the same; his enemies, and those that hate him, are the same persons; and to be scattered and flee express the same things; for enemies, being discomfited, flee and scatter. Some interpret this of the watch set to guard our Lord’s sepulchre; who, upon his rising from the dead, were filled with great fear and dread, and scattered, and fled to the priests, to acquaint them with what was done: others, of the Jewish nation in general, who were enemies to Christ; and hated him, and would not have him to reign over them; against whom he rose up and exerted his great strength; came in his kingdom and power against them; poured out his wrath upon them to the uttermost; which issued in the utter destruction of them, as a body politic; and in the entire dispersion of them in all countries, which remains until quite recently. Or rather the whole is to be applied to Satan, and to his principalities and powers; the professed enemies of Christ, personal and mystical; who, when he arose and exerted

his mighty power in his conflict with them, in the garden and on the cross, were spoiled and dissipated, and obliged to fly before him: and who at the same time overcame the world, made an end of sin, abolished death, as well as destroyed him which had the power of it; (see ^{<4106>}Numbers 10:35).

Ver. 2. *As smoke is driven away, so drive [them] away*, etc.] This both describes the character of wicked men, Christ's enemies; as their darkness and ignorance, their will worship and superstition, and their detestableness to God, (^{<4102>}Revelation 9:2 ^{<3515>}Isaiah 65:5); and the manner of their destruction; which is as easily brought about as smoke is driven by the wind, and is as irretrievable, like smoke that vanisheth into air ^{f882}; (see ^{<3870>}Psalms 37:20 ^{<3506>}Isaiah 51:6);

as wax melteth before fire; whereby its consistency, form, and strength, are lost. Respect may be had, both in this and the foregoing metaphor, to the fire of, divine wrath, and the smoke of eternal torments; since it follows:

[so] let the wicked perish at the presence of God; the appearance of Christ, either in his awful dispensation against the Jews, or in the last judgment; when the wicked shall not be able to stand before his face, but shall call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from him; and when they shall be bid to depart from him, and shall be punished with everlasting destruction in soul and body, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.

Ver. 3. *But let the righteous be glad*, etc.] At the incarnation of Christ, which is matter of joy to all people that believe in him; as did Zacharias and Elisabeth, who were both righteous, and also Simeon; and at his resurrection from the dead, since it is for their justification, by which they are denominated righteous; as did the disciples of Christ, and as do saints in all ages; who know the power of his resurrection, and the influence it has on the regeneration of their souls, the justification of their persons now, and the resurrection of their bodies hereafter; and at the destruction of the enemies of Christ and theirs;

let them rejoice before God; in the presence of him; enjoying communion with him; having views of interest in him; as they do when this is the case, and as they will when they shall appear before him, and stand at his right hand at the last day, clothed with his righteousness, and having palms in their hands;

yea, let them exceedingly rejoice; as they have just reason to do, in his person, grace, righteousness, and salvation. All these expressions denote

the greatness, frequency, fervency, fulness, and continuance of their joy. They may be rendered in the future, “but the righteous shall be glad”^{f883}, etc. so the Targum.

Ver. 4. *Sing unto God*, etc.] Manifest in the flesh, risen from the dead, ascended on high, set down at the right hand of his divine Father; having exerted his great strength in their redemption; and therefore should sing the song of redeeming love, with grace and melody in their hearts, unto him;

sing praises to his name: to the honour of his name Jesus, a Saviour, because of the great work of salvation wrought out by him; give him all the praise and glory of it, which due unto his name;

extol him that rideth upon heavens: having ascended above them, and being higher than they, and so is exalted above all blessing and praise; and uses his power and greatness for the help of his people: (see ^{<6326>}Deuteronomy 33:26). Some choose to render the words, “prepare the way”^{f884}, as John the Baptist is said to do before him, (^{<2103>}Isaiah 11:3); “for him that rideth through the deserts”, or “fields”^{f885}; as he did through the fields of Judea on an ass; and through the nations of the world, in the ministry of the word, carried thither by his apostles; whereby places, comparable to deserts for their barrenness and unfruitfulness, became like the garden of the Lord: or rather, “that rideth in the west”; it being at the west end of the tabernacle and temple, where the cherubim were, on which Jehovah rode, they being his chariot;

by his name JAH; or Jehovah; which being a name incommunicable to creatures, and given to Christ, shows him to be the most High; a self-existent Being, the immutable and everlasting “I AM”; which is, and was, and is to come; from whom all creatures receive their being, and are continued in it; and who is also Jehovah our righteousness; and by, in, and because of this name, is he to be extolled and magnified;

and rejoice before him; (see Gill on “^{<4803>}Psalm 68:3”).

Ver. 5. *A father of the fatherless*, etc.] In a literal sense, so as to show mercy to them, take care of them, and protect them; and this is a character which the great God often assumes, partly to express his power and providence over such, and partly to signify his tenderness, mercy, and goodness to them; and in which he should be imitated by civil magistrates, and by all good men: for it was not only a law in Israel to show regard to such, and take care not to afflict them, but it is also a branch of pure

undefiled Christian religion, (⁵⁰²⁷James 1:27), in attending to which we resemble the great Author of it, who is here intended. Moreover, this may be understood in a spiritual sense of such who are deserted by their friends, or are called to leave father and mother for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; and who are like fatherless ones, in an helpless condition in themselves, and are sensible of it; and will not trust in the creature, nor in any works of their own, but apply to Christ, where they have help and salvation, in whom the fatherless find mercy, (²⁸⁴⁸Hosea 14:3); and who afterwards, when they are without the presence of Christ, and sensible communion with him, are like orphans or fatherless children; but Christ, who is the father of such, will not leave them so, will have pity on them, show favour to them, provide everything needful for them, and will come and visit them, as in (⁶¹⁴⁸John 14:18); where the word “orphans” or “fatherless” is used of Christ’s disciples;

and a Judge of the widows; of such who are widows indeed in a literal sense, and especially that are believers, his elect that cry unto him; (see ²¹⁹²Luke 18:2,3,6,7); and of such who are so in a spiritual sense; even of the whole church of Christ, who may, even now, be said to be in a widowhood estate, as well as under the former dispensation; since Christ, her bridegroom, is gone to heaven, and who yet, in the mean time, is her Judge, protector, and defender; and when she is made ready for him, as a bride adorned for her husband, will come and take her to himself, and she shall remember the reproach of her widowhood no more, (²⁵⁰⁴Isaiah 54:4,5);

[is] God in his holy habitation: in heaven, the habitation of his holiness, where is Christ the high and Holy One; and has respect to the poor and lowly, the fatherless and the widow: or in his church, his holy temple, where he dwells and walks, and grants his gracious presence, and will do to the end of the world, according to his promise; or in his holy human nature, the temple and the tabernacle, in which the Godhead dwells.

Ver. 6. *God setteth the solitary in families*, etc.] Which the Jewish writers generally understand of an increase of families, with children in lawful marriage; (see ⁴⁸³⁹Psalms 113:9); an instance of which we have in Abraham and Sarah; from which single or solitary ones, when joined in marriage, sprung a numerous offspring, (²⁵¹²Isaiah 51:2 ³⁸¹²Hebrews 11:12). And to this sense the Targum paraphrases the words;

“God is he that joins, couples single ones into a couple, as one:”

some copies add,

“to build an house out of them;”

that is, a family; (see ^{<R411>}Ruth 4:11). But it may be better interpreted of the fruitfulness and increase of the church with converts, under the Gospel dispensation, even from among the Gentiles; who were before solitary, or were alone, without God and Christ, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; but being called and converted by the ministry of the word, were brought into and placed in Gospel churches, or families; (see ^{<2511>}Isaiah 54:1 ^{<R06>}Galatians 4:26,27 ^{<H29>}Ephesians 2:19 ^{<4423>}Acts 14:23); and may be applied to particular persons, who, before conversion, may be said to be “solitary” or alone; living without God, the knowledge and fear of him, and fellowship with him, being alienated from the life of him through ignorance; and without Christ, and communion with him, he not dwelling in them, nor they in him; and also sensual, not having the Spirit, his graces and fruits; being destitute of faith, hope, and love: and, moreover, aliens from the people of God, having no society with them, being in a state of solitude and darkness, and under the power of sin and Satan; helpless and “desolate”, as the word here used rendered, (^{<12516>}Psalms 25:16). But, in effectual calling, such are brought out of this dismal state, and being drawn with the cords of love by the Spirit, to the Father and the Son, and brought to a spiritual acquaintance with them, they are “set in families”, or placed in Gospel churches; which, as families, have a master over them, who is Christ the Son and firstborn, of whom they are named; where are saints of various ages, sizes, and standing; some fathers, some young men, and some children; where are provisions suitable for them, and stewards to give them their portion of meat in due season, who are the ministers of the word; and laws and rules, by which they are directed and regulated, and everything is kept in good decorum;

he bringeth out those which are bound with chains; as Peter and others literally, (^{<4115>}Acts 12:5-11 ^{<7123>}2 Corinthians 11:23); or rather it is to be understood spiritually of such as are bound with the chains of their own sins, and are under the power of them, with the fetters of the law, in which they are held, and who are led and kept captive by Satan; those Christ the Son makes free, proclaims liberty to them, says to such prisoners, Go forth; and, by the blood of his covenant, sends them forth, and directs them to himself, the strong hold, as prisoners of hope; (see ^{<2310>}Isaiah 61:1 49:9 ^{<R01>}Zechariah 9:11,12). The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render

it, “he bringeth forth the prisoners with fortitude”; so Apollinarius, “with his great power and strength”; and the Syriac version, with prosperity; or in a pompous manner, as the Targum. But the words may be better rendered, “he bringeth forth the prisoners”, either as Ainsworth, “into fit (and commodious) places”, or rather, “into the conveniencies” or “commodities”: that is, of life, such as prisoners are destitute of;

but the rebellious dwell in a dry [land]; meaning the Jews, to whom Christ came, and whom they rejected, reviled, hated, and would not have him to reign over them, and were a gainsaying and disobedient people; for which their land was smitten with a curse, and in the time of their wars became a dry land; when famine and pestilence were everywhere, and such tribulation as was never known, (^{23X21}Isaiah 8:21,22 ⁴¹⁴⁶Matthew 24:6,7,21). Moreover, the nations of the world, among whom they are dispersed, are a dry land to them; and even such places as are become fruitful through the preaching of the Gospel are no other to them, who neither do hear it, nor will they hear it; and they are like persons in a dry and thirsty land, vainly expecting a Messiah, who will never come. This may also be applied to all that obey not the Gospel of Christ, who will be punished with everlasting destruction from his presence, and shall not have a drop of cold water allowed them to cool their tongue. The allusion may be thought to be to the Jews, that murmured and rebelled against God, and vexed his Spirit in the wilderness, where their carcasses fell; and so dwelt in a dry land, and entered not into rest, or the land of Canaan. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render it, “in graves”; Apollinarius paraphrases it,

“he bringeth the dead out of the graves to light.”

Ver. 7. *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people*, etc.] In the pillar of cloud, and in the pillar of fire, as the Targum adds; and this divine Person was the Son of God, the Angel of his presence, in whom his name was, even his name JAH or Jehovah before mentioned;

when thou didst march through the wilderness; at the head of the Israelites, leading, guiding, and directing them; providing for them all things necessary, and protecting them against their enemies. And so Christ goes before his people, as they pass through the wilderness of this world; and does the like good offices for them, until he, as the great Captain of their salvation, brings them safe to glory: for what is here said is taken notice of as a resemblance of what he now does, or has done, under the Gospel

dispensation, to which this psalm belongs; particularly of his marching through the wilderness of the Gentile world, in the ministry of the word by his apostles, wherein he went forth conquering and to conquer.

Selah; on this word, (see Gill on “^{<1982>}Psalm 3:2”).

Ver. 8. *The earth shook*, etc.] Not only about Sinai, but in other places; (see ^{<1341>}Psalm 114:1,4,6,7 ^{<1386>}Habakkuk 3:6,10). It may also design the dread and trembling of the inhabitants of the earth, when they heard of the wonderful things God did for his people, (^{<1254>}Exodus 15:14-16);

the heavens also dropped at the presence of God; the Targum supplies, dew; to which may be added, quails and manna: though it rather seems to design a large shower of rain, which followed the lightning and thunder, when the law was given;

[even] Sinai itself [was moved] at the presence of God, the God of Israel: it is said to quake greatly, (^{<1298>}Exodus 19:18). The words of this verse and (^{<1387>}Psalm 68:7) seem to be borrowed out of the song of Deborah, (^{<1078>}Judges 5:4,5). Like effects followed the promulgation of the Gospel, even a shaking of the heavens and of the earth as an emblem of the removing of the ceremonial rites and Mosaic ordinances. Let it be observed, that Christ, who went before the Israelites in the wilderness, and whom they tempted and rebelled against, is called the God of Israel.

Ver. 9. *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain*, etc.] Not of water literally taken, as when the Israelites passed through the sea, (^{<1377>}Psalm 77:17); or when the thunderings and lightnings were on Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law, which are commonly attended with rain, (^{<1296>}Exodus 19:16); or in the land of Canaan, which was the land that drank in the water of the rain of heaven, (^{<1511>}Deuteronomy 11:11); nor the rain of manna and of quails, as Arama, (^{<1214>}Exodus 16:4 ^{<1323>}Psalm 78:23,27); but either the effusion of the Holy Spirit, ordinary or extraordinary; that, on the day of Pentecost, in consequence of Christ’s ascension, prophesied of in this psalm, was a “plentiful” one indeed; when the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, and baptized with it: yea, the ordinary measure of the Spirit’s grace in conversion is abundant, and exceeding abundant; it is shed abundantly through Christ, and superabounds sin, and may be called, as the words here signify, “a rain of liberalities”^{f886}, or a free and liberal rain; for it comes from the free grace of God, and makes those on whom it descends a willing people in their obedience. The Spirit of God is a free Spirit; and,

where he is, there is liberty, in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty. Or else the ministration of the Gospel^{f887} is meant; which is compared to rain, (^{f887}Deuteronomy 32:2 ^{f887}Isaiah 55:9-11). This, especially in the first times of the Gospel, was a very large and plentiful one; it being sent all over the world, and brought forth fruit in every place: this was also a “liberal” one, flowed from the free grace of God; the subject of it is free grace; and the tendency and effect of it are, to make men free from the bondage of the law, and the spirit of bondage which that induces. The Targum is,

“thou hast let down the dews of quickening, and the rains of good pleasure;”

grace, or free favour;

whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary; that is, the church, as the Targum explains it; the inheritance of Christ, which he has chosen, the Father has given him, and he possesses: the people of God, “weary” with the burdensome rites and ceremonies of the law; with their own sins and corruptions, a burden too heavy for them to bear; with the sins of others, among whom they dwell; with the temptations of Satan, with which they are annoyed; with the persecutions of the men of the world, which make them weary sometimes, and faint in their minds; and with the common afflictions of life, which often make them weary of life itself. Now, by the plentiful ministration of the doctrines of the Gospel, accompanied with the Spirit and grace of God, the hearts of the Lord’s people are refreshed, as the weary, dry, and thirsty land, is with a comfortable shower of rain; and by it weary souls have rest, or at least are directed by it to Christ, where they find it: and as the earth is “prepared”^{f888}, as the word used signifies, by rain, for the nourishment of plants; so is the church by the Gospel, whose plants are an orchard of pomegranates, for the reviving and fructifying of those who are planted in it; whereby they appear to be trees of righteousness, and the planting of the Lord; and so are confirmed, settled, and established in the house of God, and in the truths of the Gospel.

Ver. 10. *Thy congregation hath dwelt therein*, etc.] That is, in the Lord’s inheritance, in the midst of his church and people. The word for “congregation” signifies “beasts” or “living creatures”^{f889}: some understand them of the Gentiles, who, before the Gospel came among them, were comparable to such; but, under the Gospel dispensation, being called and

taken out by it, were put among the people of God, and dwelt in his inheritance. Though, without any limitation, it may be applied to all that are quickened and made alive by the grace of God; to all that are written among the living in Jerusalem; and particularly to the ministers of the Gospel, who are signified by the four living creatures, in Ezekiel's vision and in John's Revelation; though not to the exclusion of any living believer, who has a name and a place here, and who are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God:

thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor; blessings of goodness, spiritual blessings, blessings of grace and of glory; which flow from divine goodness, are in themselves good, and in their effects; and these were prepared in the covenant of grace and in Christ from all eternity; and that for persons poor and mean, indigent and helpless; and so the goodness of God in preparing them appears to be free and unmerited. The Targum is,

“thou hast prepared an host of angels to do good to the poor of God.”

Arama interprets it of the manna.

Ver. 11. *The Lord gave the word*, etc.] The word of the Gospel to his apostles. He committed the word of reconciliation to them; he intrusted them with it, as a sacred depositum; he gave gifts unto them, qualifying them for the ministration of it; he gave them a commission to preach it; and he gave them a door of utterance to speak it as it should be, and an opportunity to publish it. The Targum wrongly interprets it of the word of the law;

great [was] the company of those that published [it]; there were in our Lord's time twelve apostles and seventy disciples, who were sent out to preach the Gospel; and many more in the times of the apostles, and since. The word for “company” signifies an “army”¹⁸⁹⁰: Christ's ministers are soldiers, and war a good warfare; they have weapons which are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God, and they are made to triumph in Christ in every place. And the word rendered “those that published” is in the feminine gender; not as suggesting that women would be preachers of the Gospel under the New Testament dispensation, for that is forbidden, (~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 14:34); but in allusion to the custom of women in Israel publishing the victories obtained by their armies and generals; (see ~~1~~ 1

Samuel 18:7); and it may be it is used to denote the weakness of Gospel ministers in themselves, who have the treasure of the word put into their earthen vessels, that the power may appear to be of God, and not of man; so ministers are called maidens, (^{310B}Proverbs 9:3); and this same word is used of them in (^{231B}Isaiah 40:9). And it may be observed, that notwithstanding it is of the said gender, yet it is by the Targum interpreted of men, thus;

“but Moses and Aaron evangelized the word of God to the great army of Israel.”

And it may also be observed, that this word **twrçbmh**, which signifies a “publishing of good news”, is derived from a root which signifies “flesh” denoting, that the good tidings of the Gospel, or of peace and pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, published in it, are by an incarnate Saviour, or through his assumption of our flesh, and suffering in it.

Ver. 12. *Kings of armies did flee apace*, etc.] Or “they fled, they fled”^{f891}; or “they flee, they flee”. This is either the subject matter of the word “published”, the words of the publishers so saying; or the effect of the publication of the Gospel: for though some, by these kings of armies, understand the apostles either fleeing from place to place because of persecution, or running to and fro, as they interpret the words, to spread the Gospel; yet they rather intend the enemies of the Gospel, and the chief of them that opposed themselves to it; namely, Roman emperors and kings, and who fled before it; particularly at the time of the downfall of Paganism, when they fled to the mountains and hills, and called upon them to hide them from Christ, (⁶¹⁵Revelation 6:15,16);

and she that tarried at home divided the spoil; the church, compared to a woman that keeps at home, (⁵¹⁵Titus 2:5), who shared in the spoils token out of the hands of Satan, and from among the Gentiles, even converted souls, brought unto her. What is promised to Christ, (^{231C}Isaiah 53:12); is said of the church; she being made more than a conqueror through him, and sharing in all his victories and spoils. It denotes the certain and easy success of the Gospel ministry, attended with a divine power, and the advantages thereof to the church of Christ; this was particularly true of the church in the times of Constantine.

Ver. 13. *Though ye have lain among the pots*, etc.] Kimchi takes these words to be the words of the women, or of the psalmist addressing the

Israelites going out to war; that though they should lie in a low, dark, and disagreeable place, in the camp, in the open field, exposed to wind and weather; yet they should be fair and beautiful, and be loaded with gold and silver, the spoil of the enemy. But Fortunatus Scacchus^{f892} refers them, much better, to the encampment of the Israelites in their tents, and to the disposition and order of their army going to battle: the body of the army in the middle, and the two wings, right and left, on each side; whose glittering armour of gold and brass, the rays of the sun striking on them, are fitly resembled by the colours on the wings and back of a dove. Another learned writer^{f893} thinks they are an address to the wings of the dove; that is, to the dove itself, meaning the Holy Spirit, expostulating with him how long he would dwell within the limits and borders of the land of Canaan; which was not long after the ascension of Christ, for soon was the gift of the Holy Ghost poured down upon the Gentiles, But rather they are an address to the people of Israel; intimating, that though they had been in adversity, and their lives had been made bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; and had lain among the brick kilns and furnaces when in Egypt; and in the times of the Judges had suffered much from their neighbours, by whom they were frequently carried captive; and had been in affliction in the times of Saul; yet now in prosperous circumstances in the times of David, who had conquered their enemies, and enlarged their dominions, and restored peace; and especially would be more so in the days of Solomon, when they enjoyed great plenty and prosperity, and silver was made to be as the stones of the street. Though it is best of all to apply the words to the church and people of God in Gospel times; and they may describe their state and condition by nature and by grace, in adversity and in prosperity: the former in this clause, in which there is an allusion to scullions, or such as lie among coppers and furnaces, and are black and sooty; and so it describes the Lord's people before conversion, who are black with original sin and actual transgressions; who being transgressors from the womb, and as long as they live and walk in sin, and have their conversation with the men of the world, may be said to lie among the pots: and this may also be expressive of the church of Christ being in adversity, and black with the sun of persecution smiting her; and she might be said to lie among the pots while the ten Heathen persecutions lasted, and also in the reign of antichrist; during which time the church is in the wilderness, and the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth;

[yet shall they be as] the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold: alluding to the white silver colour of some doves. Such were the white doves Charon of Lampsacum speaks of ^{f894}, seen about Athos, which were like the white crow Ovid calls ^{f895} the silver fowl with snowy wings: and also it may be to the time when they become of a golden colour, at which time they are fit for sacrifice, as the Jews ^{f896} observe; or to the different appearances of them, according as the rays of light and of the sun differently fall upon them. So the philosopher ^{f897} observes, that the necks of doves appear of a golden colour by the refraction of light. And this describes the saints and people of God as they are by grace. They are comparable to the dove on many accounts: like doves of the valleys, everyone of them mourn for their iniquities; like the trembling and fearful dove, tremble at the apprehensions of divine wrath, and judgment to come under first convictions; and are fearful of their enemies, and of their own state; are humble, modest, and meek; think the worst of themselves, and the best of others; flee to Christ for refuge, and to ordinances for refreshment; are chaste and affectionate to Christ, and harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations, (^{<3176>}Ezekiel 7:16 ^{<3111>}Hosea 11:11 ^{<2101>}Song of Solomon 4:1 ^{<2118>}Isaiah 60:8 ^{<1016>}Matthew 10:16). Being “as the wings of a dove covered with silver” may denote the purity of doctrine held by them; the words of the Lord being as silver purified seven times, (^{<1216>}Psalm 12:6); and the preciousness and sincerity of their faith, by which they mount up with wings as eagles; and the holiness of their conversation, being as becomes the Gospel of Christ: and being as the “feathers” of a dove covered “with yellow gold” may denote their being adorned with the graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love; which are more precious than gold that perisheth, and are called chains of gold, (^{<2110>}Song of Solomon 1:10); (see ^{<1007>}1 Peter 1:7); or their being clothed with the righteousness of Christ, signified by gold of Ophir, and clothing of wrought gold, (^{<1919>}Psalm 45:9,13); or their being enriched with the unsearchable, solid, substantial, and durable riches of Christ, (^{<1118>}Revelation 3:18). And both may describe also the prosperous estates of the church, either in the first ages of Christianity, when she was clothed with the sun, and had a crown of twelve stars on her head, (^{<1121>}Revelation 12:1); or in the latter day, when her light will be come, and the glory of the Lord will rise upon her; when her stones will be laid with fair colours, and her foundations with sapphires; when she shall, have the glory of God upon her, and be as a bride adorned for her husband, (^{<2101>}Isaiah 60:1,2 54:11,12 ^{<1121>}Revelation 21:9-11).

Ver. 14. *When the Almighty scattered kings in it*, etc.] His inheritance, his congregation, the church, (^{398B}Psalm 68:9,10). Which some understand of his diffusing, and spreading and giving, in large numbers, ministers and preachers of the Gospel, pastors and teachers; who are kings and spiritual governors, are over churches, and have the rule over them in the Lord: and so Jarchi interprets them of the disciples of the wise men. Or they may be understood of the Lord's bringing into his churches such as are made kings and priests unto God, and in whose hearts grace reigns; and even of kings, in a literal sense, who will be brought into the church in the latter day, (^{234B}Isaiah 49:23 60:3,11,16 ^{398B}Psalm 68:27,29). Though they may be interpreted of wicked kings, and the destruction of them "by it" ^{f898}, the dove, the church of Christ; which will be done at the battle of Armageddon, at which time we read of the church being clothed in white, as follows; (see ⁶⁶⁴Revelation 16:14,16 19:8,14,18,19). The name of "Almighty" well agrees with Christ, (^{610B}Revelation 1:8); or "Shaddai", who is sufficient, all sufficient; and whose grace is sufficient for his people, (^{471B}2 Corinthians 12:9);

it was [white] as snow in Salmon; a mountain near to Shechem, (⁰⁰⁹⁸Judges 9:48); which seems to have had its name from the shady trees upon it; and which also, as it seems from hence, was sometimes covered with snow; as was Lebanon, so called from the whiteness of the snow on it; and Olympus is called snowy by Homer, from the snow continually on it ^{f899}. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, "in darkness", or "in the shadow of death"; denoting, as Ainsworth observes, light in darkness; joy in tribulation: but rather it may design the purity of the church and people of God, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them, which is as fine linen, clean and white; and through his pardoning blood, whereby their scarlet and crimson sins are as white as wool, as white as snow; and through the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, by which they are washed and cleansed, and made all glorious within; and through the holiness of their lives and conversations, they hating the garment spotted with the flesh; and washing their garments, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb: or they may be said to be so, as having got the victory over all their enemies; and especially this will be the case when the kings of the earth will be scattered and destroyed by the Almighty Saviour, (^{610B}Revelation 7:9 19:14).

Ver. 15. *The hill of God [is as] the hill of Bashan*, etc.] The church is the hill of God, an excellent and supereminent one, and in which he dwells, as is said in (^{398B}Psalm 68:16); called an hill for its visibility, and especially as

it will be in the latter day, when it will be established and exalted above the mountains and hills, the kingdoms of this world, (^{<231D>}Isaiah 2:2); this is compared to the hill of Bashan for fertility and fruitfulness; hence we read of the kine and bulls, the rams and lambs, and fatlings of Bashan, and of the oaks thereof, (^{<6214>}Deuteronomy 32:14 ^{<4212>}Psalms 22:12) (^{<231D>}Isaiah 2:13 ^{<6218>}Ezekiel 39:18 ^{<1011>}Amos 4:1); the ordinances of the church are green pastures, where his people become fat and flourishing, (^{<421D>}Psalms 23:2 92:13,14);

an high hill, [as] the hill of Bashan; or “an hill of eminences”^{f900}; it had several tops, or little hills that rose up from it; so the church of Christ, though but one hill or church in general, yet there are several little hills belong unto it, or particular congregational churches, of which it consists: for “a mountain abounding with cheese”^{f901}; which fed much cattle, and these produced much milk, of which large quantities of cheese were made, and so is expressive of the fruitfulness of it.

Ver. 16. *Why leap ye, ye high hills?* etc.] Meaning the kingdoms of this world that lift up themselves above, and look with contempt upon the interest, kingdom, and church of Christ; lie in wait for it, leap upon it, insult over it, and endeavour to crush and extirpate it; but all in vain; these high hills and mountains are nothing before Zerubbabel King of saints; his church is built on a rock, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands will become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth, and break in pieces and consume the kingdoms of it: the word **dxr**, in, the Arabic language, signifies “to lie in wait”, as Jarchi from R. Moses Hadarsan observes; and to look out, and leap upon the prey; so R. Hai in Ben Melech says, it has the signification of looking, observing, hoping, or waiting, in the Arable language^{f902};

[this is] the hill [which] God desireth to dwell in; as in (^{<421D>}Psalms 132:13); the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; the essential Word, the Messiah: his desire was towards his church and people, in eternity, in time, and now is; he has chosen and desired them for his habitation, and in the midst of them he delights to be, (^{<601B>}Revelation 1:13);

yea, the Lord will dwell [in it] for ever: he dwells in his church now by his gracious presence; he will dwell in the New Jerusalem church state personally for the space of a thousand years; and after that he will dwell with and among his people to all eternity; (see ^{<4214>}Psalms 132:14).

Ver. 17. *The chariots of God [are] twenty thousand*, etc.] By which are meant the angels, as the following clause shows; called “chariots”, because they have appeared in such a form, (^{<1211>}2 Kings 2:11 6:17); and because, like chariots of war, they are the strength and protection of the Lord’s people; and because of their swiftness in doing his work; and because they are for his honour and glory: they are the chariots of God, in which he rides about the world doing his will; they are the chariots in which Christ ascended up to heaven, and in which he will descend at the last day; and in which he now fetches the souls of his people to him at death, and will make use of them at the resurrection to gather them to him, when their bodies are raised by him: their number is very great, and in other places is mentioned as greater, (^{<2070>}Daniel 7:10 ^{<4651>}Revelation 5:11); Christ speaks of twelve legions of them, (^{<4263>}Matthew 26:53); there is a multitude of them, and they are said to be even innumerable, (^{<4213>}Luke 2:13 ^{<8122>}Hebrews 12:22); which is observed, both for the glory of God, and for the safety of his people: even “thousands of angels”; the word for “angels” is only used in this place; Kimchi and Ben Melech take it to be one of the names of angels by which they were called: some derive it from a word which signifies “peaceable [and] quiet”; as expressive of the tranquil state in which they are in heaven, always beholding the face of God there: others from a word which signifies “sharp”, as Jarchi; and so refers to their being the executioners of God’s wrath and vengeance on men, and alluding to a sort of chariots with sharp hooks used in war: others from a word which signifies to “second”; these being the second, or next to God, the chief princes; or, as Aben Ezra, it denotes the number of angels, even “two thousand”; so the Targum,

“the chariots of God are two myriads (or twenty thousand) of burning fires, two thousand of angels lead them;”

the Lord [is] among them [as in] Sinai, in the holy [place]; that is, at the head of them, being their Governor and Commander, at whose beck they are, and ready to do his will; and he was among them when he ascended to heaven, as it follows, being carried up by them; as he was among them at Sinai, when the law was given; for Christ was there then, (^{<4473>}Acts 7:38); and attended with ten thousands of his holy angels, by whom the law was ordained, spoken, and given, (^{<4532>}Deuteronomy 33:2 ^{<4473>}Acts 7:53 ^{<8119>}Galatians 3:19) (^{<8102>}Hebrews 2:2); which Sinai is called the holy place, from the presence of God there, and the law given from it: or else the sense is, that Christ is among the angels as in Sinai of old; so in the holy place, in

Sion his holy hill, the church under the Gospel dispensation, where there are an innumerable company of angels, (^{<S122>}Hebrews 12:22); according to the construction of the word in the Hebrew text, it seems as if Sinai was in the holy place, the inside of it being of cedar, like the Shittim wood that grew about Sinai ^{f903}; or rather the worship commanded and directed to on mount Sinai was performed in it.

Ver. 18. *Thou hast ascended on high*, etc.] Which is to be understood, not of Moses ascending up to the firmament, as the Targum and Jarchi interpret it, of which we nowhere read; nor of David's going up to the high fortresses, as Aben Ezra; nor of God's ascent from Mount Sinai; but of Christ's ascension to heaven, as the apostle cites and explains it in (^{<A08>}Ephesians 4:8,9); which ascension respects him as man, was not figurative, as in (^{<A172>}Genesis 17:22); but real and local, from earth to heaven, and was certain and visible; he was seen to go up by angels and men; and, because of the certainty of it, it is here expressed in the past tense, though it was then future;

thou hast led captivity captive; meaning either such who had been captives, in which sense the word is used, (^{<A08>}Psalm 126:1); and so may design either those who had been prisoners in the grave, but were set free at Christ's resurrection, and went with him in triumph to heaven; or all his people, whom he redeemed by his blood from that captivity and bondage they were in by nature; or rather those who led them captive are here meant by "captivity"; such as sin, Satan, the world, death, and every spiritual enemy, whom Christ conquered and triumphed over; the allusion may be to public triumphs, when captives were led in chains, even kings and great men, that had captivated others: the words seem to be borrowed out of (^{<A152>}Judges 5:12);

thou hast received gifts for men; the gifts of the Holy Spirit, qualifying men for the ministry of the Gospel, as they are interpreted by the Apostle, (^{<A08>}Ephesians 4:11); these Christ received from his divine Father in human nature, when he ascended up to heaven, in order to give them to men; and which he did in a very extraordinary manner on the day of Pentecost. The Targum and Syriac version render it, "thou hast given gifts to men"; and the Arabic version, "and he gave gifts to men", as the apostle, (^{<A08>}Ephesians 4:8);

yea, [for] the rebellious also; disobedient and unbelieving ^{f904}, as all men are by nature, even God's elect, before conversion, (^{<A08>}Titus 3:3); who are

not only called by grace, and have the blessings of grace bestowed upon them; but some of them have gifts given them, whereby they are fitted to preach the Gospel to others, as Saul, the blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious; and some of those among the Jews, that were concerned in the crucifixion of Christ: though some think the Gentiles are intended, on whom the Holy Spirit was poured forth after our Lord's ascension; and so the Targum interprets it of the rebellious, who become proselytes, and return by repentance;

that the Lord God might dwell [among them]; that is, that they, by the gifts and graces of the Spirit bestowed on them, might become a fit habitation for God; or that "they", the rebellious, being now partakers of the grace of God and his gifts, "might dwell [with] the Lord God"^{f905} in his churches; enjoy his divine presence, and have communion with

him in his word and ordinances.

Ver. 19. *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us [with benefits]*, etc.] With all spiritual blessings, with an abundance of grace, as well as with temporal mercies, for which he is, and ought to be, praised day by day: so Aben Ezra and Kimchi supply the text, and suppose the word "blessings" or "goodness" to be wanting; though the words may be rendered, "blessed be the Lord day by day, he will hear us", or "carry us"^{f906}; as a father his child, or a shepherd his lambs; and so he does from the womb, even to hoary hairs; and therefore blessing and praise should be ascribed to him; (see ^{<44B>}Isaiah 46:3,4 63:9); or "he will put a burden upon us"^{f907}; meaning the burden of afflictions: these are of the Lord's laying upon his people; and he will lay no more upon them than he will enable them to bear; and will, in his own time and way, deliver them from them, and be the author of salvation to them, as follows; and therefore his name is to be praised, (^{<40B>}1 Corinthians 10:13); the Targum interprets it of the burdensomeness of the law;

"blessed be the Lord every day, he burdens us, adding precepts unto precepts;"

[even] the God of our salvation; the author of temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation, as Christ is.

Selah; on this word, (see Gill on "^{<48B>}Psalm 3:2").

Ver. 20. [*He that is*] *our God*, etc.] Or “God for us”^{f908}; is on our side; and is the mighty God, able to save to the uttermost;

[*is*] *the God of salvation*; or “God for salvations”^{f909}; for the obtaining of them for his people, and giving them to them, even of every kind;

and unto God the Lord [belong] the issues from death; deliverance from it; Christ has abolished it, and him that had the power of it; has delivered himself from it, and will deliver all his people from it, though they become subject to it, as well as from eternal death; for he has the keys of hell and death in his hands. Some render the words, “to God the Lord belong the issues”, or “ways unto death”^{f910}; he has various ways of bringing persons to death, of destroying his and his people’s enemies; and so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi interpret it; though the following words seem to be opposed to these: the Heathens had a notion that the power of death belonged to God; hence they had a deity called the god of death, “Dites”^{f911}.

Ver. 21. *But God shall wound the head of his enemies*, etc.] Him who is the chief of his enemies, even Satan the prince of devils, the god of the world, the father of the wicked Jews, all enemies of Christ; to “wound” is the same as to bruise him, as in (^{<ORIS>}Genesis 3:15); and so the Targum here,

“but God shall break the head of his enemies;”

disappoint his schemes, blast his designs, crush his power and authority, demolish his empire, and eternally destroy him with the fire prepared for him and his angels; and the same may be applied to the man of sin, and all other enemies of Christ, who is the divine Person here, and all along, spoken of; (see ^{<ORIS>}Psalms 110:6);

[*and*] *the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses*; by whom may be meant antichrist: Jarchi interprets it of Esau, who was an hairy man, and a figure of antichrist: and his hairy scalp may denote his fierceness and cruelty, appearing like a savage beast, drinking the blood of the saints; and like a thief and a robber, who used to let their hair grow long, shagged, and entangled, to strike terror into men they met with, (^{<ORIS>}Job 5:5); and also his pride and haughtiness; he exalting himself above all that is called God, and opening his mouth in blasphemy against him: and likewise it signifies his great power and authority, he having people, kingdoms, and nations, depending upon him, as hair on the head, and subject to him: and of him it may be truly said, that he “goes on still in his

trespasses"; in tyranny, idolatry, superstition, and will worship; taking no notice of what God says by his witnesses, nor any warning by what the eastern empire suffered by the Turks and Saracens; so as to repent of the works of his hands, of worshipping idols of gold, silver, brass, and wood; nor of his murders, sorceries, fornications, and thefts; but still persisting in them, until his, and the sins of his followers, reach to heaven, (^{<4611>}Revelation 9:20,21 18:5); but the God-man, Christ Jesus, will give him a deadly wound, of which he shall never be healed: this also holds true of all that persist in a sinful course of life without repentance; who are workers of iniquity, whose lives are one continued series of sinning; these will be punished by Christ with everlasting destruction.

Ver. 22. *The Lord said*, etc.] Within himself, in his own heart; he resolved upon it in his mind; or he said it in council and in covenant; he undertook and engaged to do what follows; or he spoke of it in promise and in prophecy, as what would be done;

I will bring again from Bashan; as he delivered his people from Og king of Bashan formerly, (^{<4923>}Numbers 21:33-35); so he purposed and promised to ransom them out of the hands of him that was stronger than they; to recover them from the strong man armed, and deliver them from the power of darkness, and translate them into his own kingdom, and save them from all the bulls of Bashan; (see ^{<4972>}Psalms 22:12); to which text Jarchi refers in the exposition of this; though some understand it of the fat and great ones of the earth, of the conversion of kings and princes, (^{<4979>}Psalms 22:29);

I will bring [my people] again from the depths of the sea; out of the most wretched and desperate condition, out of the depths of sin and misery; out of an helpless and hopeless state, in which they were through the fall, and their actual transgressions: the allusion is to the bringing of the children of Israel through the Red sea, and out of the depths of it, unto dry land: the Targum interprets the whole of the resurrection of the righteous, whether devoured by wild beasts, or drowned in the sea; (see ^{<6113>}Revelation 20:13); some interpret the passage of the Lord's gathering of his people, in the effectual calling, from the east and from the west; from the east, signified by Bashan; and from the west, by the depths of the sea; (see ^{<2415>}Isaiah 43:5).

Ver. 23. *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of [thine] enemies*, etc.] This verse is in connection with (^{<4982>}Psalms 68:21), with (^{<4983>}Psalms 68:23) being to be read in a parenthesis: the sense is, that the Messiah would so

wound the head and hairy scalp of his people's enemies, and there should be such a large effusion of blood, that their feet should be dipped therein, (⁶⁴⁴⁰Revelation 14:20); (see Gill on "⁴²⁸⁰Psalm 58:10");

[and] the tongue of thy dogs in the same; who should lick it up, as the dogs licked the blood of Jezebel, (¹²¹⁹1 Kings 21:19 ⁴¹⁸⁵2 Kings 9:35,36); and so such a carnage will be made of antichrist and his followers, that the fowls of the heavens will be called upon to eat the flesh of kings, captains, and mighty ones, (⁶⁶⁹⁷Revelation 19:17,18).

Ver. 24. *They have seen thy goings, O God,* etc.] In saving his people, and destroying his enemies;

[even] the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary; the walk and conversation of Christ, when he was made flesh, and dwelt among men; his manner of life and deportment; his works and miracles, his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead; all which his apostles were eyewitnesses of; as also his going up to heaven, which was visible to angels and men; likewise his progress and victorious expeditions in Judea, and in the Gentile world, by the ministry of the word, in which he went forth conquering, and to conquer; which sense is confirmed by the following words: for Christ, who is God over all, the Lord and God of his people, and King of saints, is here, as throughout the psalm, intended. The Targum interprets it of the path or goings of the divine Majesty upon the sea, which the house of Israel saw.

Ver. 25. *The singers went before,* etc.] The apostles and ministers of the word, the sweet singers of Israel, the charmers that charm so very wisely: the Gospel is a joyful sound; it is like vocal music, harmonious and delightful; it is as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, as Ezekiel's ministry was, (²⁶⁸⁰Ezekiel 33:32); it is a voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, and righteousness, and of eternal life and salvation by Christ; it is as music in the ears of sensible souls, when sounded forth, and sung out clearly and distinctly by the faithful ministers of it. The allusion seems to be to singers going before armies, when marching to battle, or returning with victory; (see ⁴⁰⁴¹2 Chronicles 20:21,28);

the players on instruments [followed] after; so the sweet strains of the Gospel, the melodious notes and distinguishing sounds of it, as well as the

praises of God's people, are, in the New Testament, signified by harps, and men's playing upon them, (^{<668>}Revelation 5:8 14:2 15:2);

amongst [them were] the damsels playing with timbrels; or “in the midst of the virgins playing [with] timbrels”^{f912}; or “beating on tabrets”; as women used to do when they met their kings returning from the conquest of their enemies; (see ^{<618>}1 Samuel 18:6,7); these may be the pure and primitive churches of Christ, and the members thereof, rejoicing at the preaching of the Gospel, and praising God for the blessings of grace in it; in the midst of which the ministers of the word sung the new song of Gospel truths: and who may be compared to damsels or virgins for their beauty and comeliness through Christ; for their relation to him, being betrothed unto him; and for their strong and chaste affection for him; for their uncorruptness in doctrine and worship, and their uprightness in their lives and conversation, (^{<644>}Revelation 14:4); the allusion may be to Miriam and the women with her at the Red sea, (^{<615>}Exodus 15:20); and the Targum interprets the whole verse of Moses and Aaron singing at the Red sea, and of Miriam and the women playing with timbrels.

Ver. 26. *Bless ye God in the congregations*, etc.] This was what they said as they sung and played; they called upon the churches, and the members of them, and upon one another, to bless the Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh; not by invoking or bestowing a blessing on him, which cannot be, and of which he has no need; but by proclaiming him to be God over all, blessed for evermore, as he is in himself; and the perfections of his nature, by attributing all the blessings of nature, grace, and glory to him, in whom they are, and from whom they come; and by exercising faith upon him for them particularly, and for pardon, righteousness, supplies of grace, and everlasting salvation; and by giving him the glory of all, and ascribing blessing and honour to him on account of them; which should be done openly and publicly, in the several particular congregated churches of Christ; and this shows the psalm still refers to Gospel times, in which only such churches are;

[even] the Lord, from the fountain of Israel; or, “the Lord, [who is] of the fountain of Israel”^{f913}; that is, whose natural descent is from Israel, or Jacob, as Christ's was, according to the flesh, (^{<615>}Romans 9:5); though some take this to be a description of the posterity of Jacob, those that go out from the fountain of Israel, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; (see ^{<381>}Isaiah 48:1); so the Tigurine version, and others; who are called upon to bless the

Lord: but then it must be understood not of the carnal Israelites, they rejected the Messiah, Jesus, and called him accursed; but the spiritual seed of Jacob, whether Jews or Gentiles; Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile. The Targum, and so Jarchi, interpret it of the seed of Israel; compare with this (~~<404>~~ Luke 1:41,44); the words may be read, “for”, or “because of [the fountain of] Israel” ^{f914}: God, who is the fountain of living wafers; Christ, whose blood is the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; the Spirit, who, in the operations of his grace, is a well or fountain of living water, springing up unto eternal life; and all spiritual blessings, and the abundance of them, which the spiritual Israel of God enjoy, may be designed by this phrase; and so be considered as the reason why God the Lord is to be blessed. Some understand it of the Scriptures, from whence all divine knowledge, blessing, and praise are derived; and others of the heart, and the abundance of it, from whence, and not with the lips only, men should bless and praise the Lord.

Ver. 27. *There [is] little Benjamin, [with] their ruler*, etc.] Or who is “their ruler” ^{f915}; that is, in the congregations or churches, where he was a ruler; or in the procession, the triumphal progress of Christ in Judea, and in the Gentile world, by the ministry of the word; where the singers and players of instruments, and damsels with timbrels, went in order: for not the tribe of Benjamin is meant, called “little”, because Benjamin was Jacob’s younger son; or because it was greatly weakened and reduced at Gibeah, (~~<4708>~~ Judges 20:48); and was one of the smallest tribes in Israel; and Saul’s family, who was the first king of Israel, the least in that tribe, (~~<402>~~ 1 Samuel 9:21); though the Targum interprets it of the tribe; and so Jarchi; but the Apostle Paul is here meant, who was of the tribe of Benjamin, (~~<510>~~ Romans 11:1 ~~<518>~~ Philippians 3:5); was a young man when he was converted, (~~<4075>~~ Acts 7:58); as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions have it here; was “little” in stature, as is generally reported of him, and as his name “Paul” may be thought to signify, and might be given him on that account; (see ~~<7000>~~ 2 Corinthians 10:10); and was little in his own eyes, less than the least of all saints, and the chief of sinners; one born out of due time, and unworthy to be called an apostle; as well as he was little and contemptible in the eyes of others; yet he was greatly honoured by Christ, had an authority from him, was a “ruler” in his churches; set in the first place there, made an apostle, and was an apostle of the Gentiles, and not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles; and he was a principal in this progress, and therefore is named first: he was a chosen vessel to bear the

name of Christ, and carry it into the Gentile world; he travelled and laboured more abundantly than the rest, and preached the Gospel fully from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, render it, “there was Benjamin the younger in an ecstasy”, or trance, as the Apostle Paul was, (~~400~~ Acts 9:9 22:17 ~~472B~~ 2 Corinthians 12:2-4); but our version is best;

the princes of Judah, [and] their council; or “company”, as Kimchi; their churches, or congregations over which they presided, or were the means of gathering; these were the apostles, some of which were of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe Christ was, and so must be those that are called his brethren, (~~405~~ Matthew 13:55 ~~401A~~ Acts 1:14); these were “princes”, not only in common with other Christians, by adoption and regeneration, but by their office, being apostles, and over others in the Lord; and besides the church at Jerusalem, where James presided, there were other churches in Judea, which had spiritual guides and governors over them; (see ~~383~~ Hebrews 13:7,17); and so the Septuagint version, and those that follow it, render the words, “the princes of Judah, their governors”; and so Aben Ezra interprets them, and observes that “regem”, in (~~370~~ Zechariah 7:2) so signifies; to which the sense of R. Menachem in Jarchi agrees, who renders it “their purpled ones”; so Cocceius; but Gussetius ^{f916} renders it “their stoning”; who stoned those that preached the Gospel to them; (see ~~425~~ Matthew 21:35 23:37); or stoned their enemies, conquered them; or “their stone” ^{f917}, the Messiah, that sprung from Judah, (~~442A~~ Genesis 49:24 ~~482~~ Psalm 118:22);

the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali; the rest of the apostles, who were of Galilee, in which country lay the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali: such as Peter, Andrew, James and John, Philip and Nathaniel, (see ~~401B~~ Matthew 4:13-21 ~~304A~~ John 1:44-46).

Ver. 28. *Thy God hath commanded thy strength*, etc.] Which is either an apostrophe or an address to the Messiah, as in (~~198B~~ Psalm 45:7); declaring, that as his God and Father had purposed and promised to send forth, so he had sent forth, the rod of his strength out of Zion, (~~380~~ Psalm 110:1,2); that is, his Gospel, both into the several cities of Judea, and into the Gentile world, where it was the power of God unto salvation, both to Jew and Gentile: or else these words are spoken to the churches and congregations, in whom the Lord’s name was to be blessed; or to the princes, rulers, and governors of them before mentioned, showing that the Lord has made

good his promise to them, that as their day was their strength should be; and it was owing to their being strengthened by him that they walked up and down in his name, doing his work, and preaching his Gospel, both to Jews and Gentiles: to which they reply by petition,

strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us; which, if understood of the apostles, princes, and rulers, refers to the work of preaching the Gospel, and the success of it, desiring it might be more and more confirmed; and to the settlement of Christianity in the Pagan world, and also to the work of the reformation from Popery in later times; compare with this (^{<4612>}Revelation 3:2); if of the churches, and the members thereof, it may respect the carrying on and finishing the work of grace in them. It is rendered “in us” by the Septuagint and others; (see ^{<2362>}Isaiah 26:12); for this work sometimes seems to be very low and weak, and needs strengthening, and it is God only that can do it, and he will do it, (^{<4150>}1 Peter 5:10); and this shows that the grace of God is not only necessary at first conversion, but to be continued for the performing of the work of grace until the day of Christ.

Ver. 29. *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem*, etc.] Not the material temple there, which was not in being in David’s time, but was built by his son, and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; and though it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, repaired by Herod, and was the Messiah’s temple, into which he entered as the Lord and proprietor of it, (^{<3001>}Malachi 3:1); yet was quickly after his time demolished, and will never be rebuilt more; but the Messiah’s spiritual temple, of which he is the builder, foundation, and cornerstone; the materials of which are believers in him, and it is for his service, worship, and glory: and “because of Jerusalem”, ^{f918}, as it may be translated: by which also the church of Christ is meant, which is the heavenly Jerusalem, the Jerusalem which is above, and free, the mother of us all, the city of the great King, the place of divine worship, and well fortified by the power and grace of God. The words may be rendered “above Jerusalem” ^{f919}, and connected either with (^{<3683>}Psalm 68:28), and so point at the place, heaven, the temple and palace of the Messiah; from whence spiritual health and strength are desired, and may be expected; or with the following words, and the sense be, “from”, or “out of thy temple in Jerusalem”: even out of the material temple, the Gospel should be preached, as it was by the apostles on the day of Pentecost; and so the word of the Lord went out from thence, and from Jerusalem into Judea, and so into the Gentile world,

where it is continued, and will be until the kings of the earth shall be converted, as follows;

shall kings bring presents unto thee: that is, such as should become Christians, as Constantine, and others, in the earlier ages of Christianity; who brought their riches and wealth to Christ, and into his church, with a design for the good and welfare of it, though it proved otherwise; and as many will in the latter day, who, being converted, will bring presents to the King Messiah, join his churches, and be their nursing fathers; (see ^{<3720>}Psalm 72:10,11 ^{<2423>}Isaiah 49:23 60:3,11,16); and who will bring their glory and honour, and that of the nations, into the New Jerusalem church state, (^{<621>}Revelation 21:24,26); and it will be because of his church and people, and for their good and welfare, as well as for the glory and honour of Christ, that those presents will be brought; and which will not only be theirs, their good things, but themselves, whom they will present to the Lord, as living and acceptable sacrifices, (^{<611>}Romans 12:1); the Targum is,

“out of thy temple thou shalt receive offerings; upon Jerusalem thy Shechinah dwells; out of their palaces kings shall bring unto thee sacrifices.”

Ver. 30. *Rebuke the company of spearmen*, etc.] Or, “of the reed” ^{f920}; that is, men that use and fight with spears, like to reeds, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it. Aben Ezra says, that spears are so called in the Kedarene or Arabian language; and the Arabians use a sort of reed for a spear, as Mr. Castel out of Avicenna observes ^{f921}, and Pliny ^{f922} says they are used spears: or rather the words should be rendered, “rebuke”, restrain, destroy “the wild beast”, or “beasts of the reed” ^{f923}; as the Syriac, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions, and others, render it: the allusion is to such kind of creatures as lions in the thickets of Jordan; (see Gill on ^{<2409>}Jeremiah 49:19”); and the behemoth, that lies under the covert of reeds, (^{<1841>}Job 40:21); or as the crocodile in the river Nile, and other rivers of Egypt, which abounded with flags and reeds, in which such creatures lay; (see ^{<2406>}Isaiah 19:6,7 35:6 36:6); perhaps the hippopotamus, or river horse, is referred to; so may design an insidious, cruel, and tyrannical prince; such an one as Pharaoh king of Egypt, (^{<2701>}Isaiah 27:1); a type of antichrist, and who seems to be here meant; for as Rome, for its wickedness, cruelty, and idolatry, is spiritually called Egypt, (^{<6108>}Revelation 11:8); so the Romish antichrist is the beast ascending out of the bottomless

pit; and is an insidious creature, lies in wait to deceive, puts on the mask and visor of Christianity; has two horns, like a lamb in his ecclesiastic capacity; lies covered with the reeds of the traditions, inventions, and the doctrines of men; and teaches men to trust in the staff of a broken reed, in their own merits, and the merits of others. Jarchi interprets it of Esau, who is like to a wild boar that dwells among the reeds; and the Talmud ^{f924} interprets it of a beast that dwells among reeds, and the gloss explains it of the nation of Amalek; the Turks, according to some, are meant;

the multitude of bulls; the secular powers of the beast of Rome; the antichristian states, their kings and princes, comparable to these creatures for their great strength, power, and authority, and for their fierceness and furiousness in persecuting the people of God: these are horned creatures, the ten horns of the beast, in his civil and secular capacity, with which he pushes at the saints, casts them down, and tramples upon them; (see ~~<2013>~~ Psalm 22:13 ~~<2598>~~ Ezekiel 39:18); compared with (~~<6698>~~ Revelation 19:18);

with the calves of the people; or the people, comparable to calves for their weakness, folly, and stupidity; these are the common people under the government and influence of the kings and princes of the earth; the people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, over whom the antichristian harlot sits, rules, and reigns: this phrase shows that the whole is to be taken, not in a literal, but figurative, sense;

[till everyone] submit himself with pieces of silver; that is, rebuke them by thy word, or by thy providences, until they become sensible of their sins, repent of them, and submit themselves to Christ; and bring with them their wealth and substance, and lay it at his feet for the use of his interest, as a testification of their subjection to him: but as this is not to be expected from the persons before described, at least not from everyone of them, the words require another sense, and are to be considered as a continued description of the persons to be rebuked, and may be rendered, even everyone “that treads with pieces of silver” ^{f925}; that walks proudly and haughtily, being decorated with gold and silver on their garments; so the Romish antichrist is said to be decked, his popes, cardinals, and bishops, with gold and precious stones, (~~<6670>~~ Revelation 17:4); or “everyone that humbles himself for pieces of silver” ^{f926}, as the word is rendered in (~~<2013>~~ Proverbs 6:3); that lies down to be trampled upon for the sake of temporal advantage; and so it describes the parasites and flatterers of the man of sin, who crouch unto him, take his mark in their hands or

foreheads, that they may be allowed to buy and sell; all these, it is desired, God would rebuke, not in love, but with flames of fire, as he will sooner or later; for when the kings of the earth are become Christians, as in (~~1989~~ Psalm 68:29), God will put it into their hearts to hate the whore, and burn her flesh with fire;

scatter thou the people [that] delight in war; as antichrist, and the antichristian states, do: they take delight in making war with the saints, and in slaying of them, to whom power has been given so to do; with whose blood they have been made drunk, and have took as much pleasure in the shedding of it as a drunken man does in indulging himself to excess in liquor; but these in God's own time shall be scattered, when Christ the Lamb shall fight against them with the sword of his mouth, and shall utterly destroy them; (see ~~6637~~ Revelation 13:7 17:6,14) (~~6695~~ Revelation 19:15-21).

Ver. 31. *Princes shall come out of Egypt*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin and all the Oriental versions render it "ambassadors". This verse is a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, under the names of Egypt and Ethiopia; which will be at the same time that the kings of the earth will become Christians, and antichrist will be destroyed. The Gospel is said to be preached in Egypt by Mark the Evangelist; and no doubt but there were conversions there in the first times of the Gospel; but there will be more in the latter day; (see ~~4987~~ Psalm 87:3,4) (~~2390~~ Isaiah 19:1-25). Unless we understand this of kings and princes, that shall leave the communion of the church of Rome, which is spiritually and mystically Egypt, and join themselves with the true churches of (see ~~6618~~ Revelation 11:8 18:4). The conversion of every sinner is a coming out of Egypt; it is a call of them out of darkness and bondage, worse than that of Egypt, into light and liberty, when they are set among princes, even the princes of Christ's people;

Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God; the Gospel is said to be preached in Ethiopia by the Evangelist Matthew, and also by Matthias, who succeeded Judas in the apostleship; by means of whose ministry there is reason to conclude some were converted: and we have an instance of a famous Ethiopian, that was converted and baptized by Philip, (~~4487~~ Acts 8:27); and who very likely carried the Gospel into this country, and spread it: so that this prophecy began to have its fulfilment then, but will have a greater hereafter; see, (~~4987~~ Psalm 87:4). All men are like Ethiopians, even God's elect, in a state of nature and unregeneracy: they are black with original sin and actual transgressions; and can no more remove this

blackness than the Ethiopian can change his skin, (^{<24123>}Jeremiah 13:23). They are, like them, idolaters, serving divers lusts and pleasures, the idols of their own hearts; are in a state of distance, afar off from God and Christ, and from his people, word, and ordinances; and are enemies in their minds by wicked works, yea, enmity itself, and stretch out their hands against God; but when they are called and converted, and made sensible of their state, then they stretch out their hands unto God, as a gesture of sorrow, (^{<2498>}Jeremiah 4:31 ^{<25017>}Lamentations 1:17); expressing their sorrow for sin, as committed against God, and because of the evil that is in it; and look to Christ, and stretch out their hands to him, whom they have pierced, and mourn; and as a prayer gesture, (^{<8113>}Job 11:13). For, as soon as a man is converted, he prays and cries to God for pardoning grace and mercy, and to be cleansed from his sin, and to be openly received into his favour, and to enjoy communion with him; and as the gesture of a man in the utmost danger, who stretches out, his hand to lay hold on anything to save him; and so a sinner, sensible of its danger, and seeing Christ and salvation in him, it stretches out its hand, lays hold on him, and will have him and no other to be its Saviour, and receives his righteousness, and grace out of his fulness; and as the gesture of one that is conquered, resigning up himself into the victor's hands, as a token of submission, peace, and reconciliation ^{f927}; so sinners, in the day of Christ's power upon them, are made willing to submit and give up themselves to him. In the Hebrew text it is, "shall make her hands to run unto God" ^{f928}; that is, with an offering, gold or some treasure, to bring it unto God, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it, which may very well be understood of the offering of themselves, as well as of the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise. The Targum is,

"the sons of Ham shall come, the great men out of Egypt, to be made proselytes; the children of Cush (or Ethiopia) shall run to stretch out their hands in prayer to God."

Jarchi's note is,

"and then when thou shalt destroy Esau (his posterity), and the King Messiah shall arise, they shall bring to thee gifts out of Ethiopia."

And so he owns this to be a prophecy of the Messiah; and so it is applied to the times of the Messiahs and to the nations bringing gifts to him, in the Talmud ^{f929}, and other Jewish writings ^{f930}.

Ver. 32. *Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth,* etc.] Not only the Egyptian and Ethiopian kingdoms, but all the kingdoms of the world; which will now be converted to Christ, and become his, even all the Papal, Pagan, and Mahometan kingdoms; (see ^{<6115>}Revelation 11:15). These are called upon to sing songs and hymns of praise to Christ, who is God, for redemption by him, and salvation in him; and for their deliverance from all the darkness and delusions under which they formerly were;

O sing praises unto the Lord; the Lord of all, the Lord of lords, the Head of the church, and Saviour of the body; and whom those converted nations will acknowledge to be their Lord and King; and make their homage, and bring their tribute of praise to him, for breaking the antichristian yokes that were upon them, and freeing them from the tyranny and bondage with which they were oppressed: this will be fulfilled in the latter day; (see ^{<6115>}Revelation 11:1,5,16,17 15:2-4 19:1,2).

Selah; on this word, (see Gill on “^{<4982>}Psalm 3:2”).

Ver. 33. *To him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens, [which were] of old,* etc.] Or “eastward” ^{<931>}; the first, second, and third heavens, which were created from the beginning of time by Christ himself, (^{<9425>}Psalm 102:25) compared with (^{<3010>}Hebrews 1:10). These he rode upon when he ascended on high, even far above all heavens, as the apostle says, (^{<4010>}Ephesians 4:10); and so above the heaven of heavens, when he was made higher than they, and both Lord and Christ; and placed his throne in them, and from thence exercises his government over the whole world: and it may be observed, that it was from Mount Olivet, which was to the east of Jerusalem, that Christ ascended, and so to the eastern part of the heavens, (^{<4012>}Acts 1:12 ^{<3144>}Zechariah 14:4); (see ^{<6115>}Revelation 7:2);

lo, he doth send out his voice; which is his Gospel, for that is the voice of Christ; which he utters by his ministers, and which his sheep, his people, hearken unto, and can distinguish from the voice of a stranger. This is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; it speaks of righteousness, peace, pardon, and salvation by him, and is very joyful and comfortable to hear. This he sent out by his apostles into all the earth, after his ascension to heaven; and which he has been, more or less, sending out in one place or another, by his ministers, ever since; and in the latter day will send it out more clearly, fully, and largely, by a set of ministers he will raise up for that purpose;

[and that] a mighty voice; or, “a voice of strength”^{f932}; a strong and powerful voice, such as the Gospel is, when accompanied with the power and Spirit of God. It is a soul shaking and awakening voice; it is an heartmelting and an heartbreaking one; it is a quickening and an enlightening voice; it quickens dead sinners, gives life unto them, and the entrance of it gives light to dark minds: it is a soul charming and alluring one; it draws to Christ, engages the affections to him, and fills with unspeakable delight and pleasure. The Targum interprets this of the voice of the spirit of prophecy; Aben Ezra understands this voice as saying what follows.

Ver. 34. *Ascribe ye strength unto God*, etc.] The Messiah; by asserting him to be the mighty God, even the Almighty; by attributing works of strength and power to him: such as the creation of all things; upholding all things in their being; the redemption and preservation of his people; the resurrection of the dead, etc. by applying to him, and exercising faith on him for spiritual strength, and giving him the glory of it: so the Targum,

“give the glory of strength to God.”

Moreover, this may be understood of ascribing dominion and power to him by the kingdoms of the earth, who are here addressed, when they shall be converted to him; and who, upon this enlargement of his kingdom, will be congratulated by his people, for taking to himself his great power and reigning, (^{<64115>}Revelation 11:15-17);

his excellency [is] over Israel; the spiritual Israel, such who are Israelites indeed. Over these his glorious Majesty in his kingdom rules; they are subject to him, and acknowledge him for their King; and among them is his Shechinah, or divine Presence. Or over Israel, literally understood; when they shall, as at this time the prophecy refers to, be all called, converted, and saved: they shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and he shall be Prince over them;

and his strength [is] in the clouds; which are round about him, the chariots in which he rides, and in which he shows his strength; by sending forth from thence the rain of his strength, the terrible lightning and thunder. In these he went up to heaven, and in these he will come again to judgment. They may be mystically understood of the ministers of the Gospel, especially in the latter day, who may be compared to clouds for their numbers, they will then be many; for their swiftness in moving to and fro,

and spreading the Gospel; and for their being full of the doctrines of grace, comparable to rain; (see ^{<21818>}Isaiah 5:6). And the Lord's strength will be seen in them, who will greatly strengthen them to do their work; his strength will be made perfect in their weakness; the excellency of the power attending their ministrations, to the large conversion of sinners, will appear to be of God, and not of man.

Ver. 35. *O God, [thou art] terrible*, etc.] In his judgments and acts of vengeance, on antichrist and the antichristian states; being the Lion of the tribe of Judah, that will break them to pieces as a potter's vessel: or "reverend"^{†933}; to be feared and worshipped by his saints;

out of thy holy places; both out of heaven, the habitation of his holiness, by angels and glorified saints there; and out of all his churches, the several assemblies of them, among whom he is greatly to be feared and adored: the Targum interprets it of the house of the sanctuary;

the God of Israel [is] he that giveth strength and power unto [his] people; his peculiar covenant people, his Israel he is the God of. These are weak, and encompassed about with infirmities; he has strength in himself for them; he has promised it to them, and he gives it to them as a pure gift and unmerited favour of his. It may be understood of the great degree of strength that will be given them in the latter day; when a small one shall be a strong nation, and the feeble shall be as David, and David as God, as the Angel of the Lord, (^{<21811>}Isaiah 60:21) (^{<31218>}Zechariah 12:8); and of the dominion and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven; which will be given to the saints of the most High, (^{<21071>}Daniel 7:27);

blessed [be] God: the psalm is concluded with an ascription of blessing to the Messiah, who is God blessed for evermore; and who, as Mediator, is the promised seed, in whom all nations were to be blessed, and now will be; (see ^{<11512>}Revelation 5:12,13).