

PSALM 147

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 147

This psalm is thought to be written by David, and according to Theodoret predicts the return of the Jews from Babylon, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Zerubbabel, which seems to be grounded on (~~1970~~ Psalm 147:2); though the words there agree well enough with the times of David; hence the title in the Septuagint, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Syriac versions, and Apollinarius, is as the preceding; the Syriac adds,

“concerning Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest, and Ezra, who were solicitous and diligent in building Jerusalem.”

Aben Ezra and other Jewish writers think it foretells the future rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the Jews from their present captivity, and refer it to the times of the Messiah; and so far it may be right, that it respects Christ and the praise of him, on account of his nature and works; and may take in the conversion of the Jews. It seems to be written by the same person, and on the same account, as the preceding psalm.

Ver. 1. *Praise ye the Lord*, etc.] When he shall reign, as Kimchi connects this psalm with the preceding; the arguments used to engage men to this work are taken partly from the nature of it, as in the next clauses; and partly from what the Lord is and does, as in the following verses;

for [it is] good to sing praises unto our God; it being agreeably to his revealed will, what he enjoins, approves of, and accepts, and is profitable to his people, as well as makes his glory; (see ~~1971~~ Psalm 92:1). Some render it, “because [he is] good”, as in (~~1972~~ Psalm 106:1 107:1); but the accents, and what follows, will not admit of this sense;

for it [is] pleasant; to our God; with which the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, join this clause; the sacrifice of praise is more pleasing to the Lord than any ceremonial sacrifice, especially when offered from a grateful heart in the name of Christ, and with a view to his glory; and it is pleasant to saints themselves, when grace is in exercise, and they make melody in their hearts to the Lord;

[and] praise is comely: is due to the Lord, and becomes his people to give it to him; it is but their reasonable service, and a beautiful and lovely sight it is to see the chosen, redeemed, and called of the Lamb, harping with their harps, and singing the song of redeeming love.

Ver. 2. *The Lord doth build up Jerusalem*, etc.] Literally, after the Babylonish captivity, according to some; or rather when taken from the Jebusites by David; or spiritually the church, which is often called Jerusalem, even the Gospel church, of which Christ is the builder, his ministers are instruments, his people are the materials, and which, though now greatly fallen to decay, will be rebuilt by him in the latter day; when his work will be revived among his saints, his Gospel more powerfully preached, his ordinances more purely administered, and multitudes of souls converted; and which will be matter of praise and thanksgiving, as it is now matter of prayer; (see ^{<4518>}Psalm 51:18 102:13,16) (^{<4618>}Jeremiah 30:18,19);

he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel; the exiles from Babylon, as some; or rather such who in the times of the judges had been carried captive by their neighbours, or fled from their cities, in the times of Saul for fear of the Philistines, and who were gathered to their own country, cities, and houses, when David began to reign. Spiritually this regards the whole Israel of God, the elect of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, and the outcasts of them; so called, not because ever cast out or cast off by the Lord, being received into his favour, covenant, and church; but either because cast out of the company of profane men, as evil and unworthy; or cast out of Israel, the church of God, very justly, for offences given; but, being brought to repentance, are restored and gathered in again: or rather this may represent the Lord's people as in a state of nature, like the wretched infant cast out into the open field, scattered up and down in the world, in a state of distance from God, Christ, and his people; these are gathered by Christ in redemption, who came to seek and collect them together; and by his spirit in conversion, when he gathers them to himself, and into his fold; and this, as it is an occasion of joy to angels and saints, is matter of praise and thanksgiving to the outcasts themselves, thus gathered in. The Septuagint render it, to the dispersion or dispersed of Israel; (see ^{<4775>}John 7:35).

Ver. 3. *He healeth the broken in heart*, etc.] Christ is a physician; many are the diseases of his people; he heals them all by his blood, stripes, wounds; and among the rest their broken hearts, which none can cure but himself; hearts broken by the word, as a hammer, accompanied with a

divine power; which have a true sense of sin, and godly sorrow for it; are truly contrite, such as the Lord has a respect unto, dwells with, and accepts of; and these he heals, and only he, by pouring in oil and wine, as the good Samaritan; or by applying pardoning grace and mercy to them, streaming through his blood;

and bindeth up their wounds; or “griefs”^{f1952}; and so gives them ease, health, and peace, for which they have abundant reason to call upon their souls to bless his name and sing his praise; (see ^{<3931>}Psalm 103:1-3); compare with this (^{<2301>}Isaiah 61:1 ^{<2100>}Luke 10:30-34).

Ver. 4. *He telleth the number of the stars*, etc.] Which no man can do exactly; (see ^{<0155>}Genesis 15:5 ^{<1825>}Job 25:3); the ancient astronomers pretended to tell them, as Aratus and Eudoxus^{f1953}, and fixed their number at a thousand and some odd; but then these were only such as were of some magnitude and influence, and such as commonly appeared; but since the use of telescopes many are seen which were not before; and especially those clusters of them in the Milky Way cannot be distinctly discerned and told; but the Lord that made them can tell their exact number. Aben Ezra thinks this is said with respect to the outcasts of Israel scattered throughout the whole earth, as the stars are in the upper orb; and that as the Lord knows the one, he knows the other; which is not amiss, especially spiritually understood;

he calleth them all by [their] names; not that he calls one Jupiter and another Verus, etc. as the Heathens have done; but the sense is, that he has as perfect, distinct, and exact knowledge of them, as we have of any persons or things that we can call by name, and more so; see (^{<2345>}Isaiah 40:26). This may be applied to the saints, who are like to stars for the light they receive from Christ the sun of righteousness, and are a number which no man can number; but Christ knows them all distinctly and exactly, and can call them by name, and holds them in his right hand, and will preserve them; and they shall shine for ever like stars, yea, like the sun in the kingdom of his Father; so Arama interprets this of the righteous, who are compared to stars; see (^{<2704>}Daniel 12:4 ^{<4011>}Revelation 2:1).

Ver. 5. *Great [is] our Lord, and of great power*, etc.] “Our Lord” is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of the whole earth; the Lord of his own people by creation, by redemption, by marriage, and by the conquest of his grace, and their voluntary submission to him; he is “great” in his person, offices, and grace, and therefore greatly to be praised; see (^{<1453>}Psalm 145:3); and

particularly his “power” is very “great”, as appears in the creation of all things out of nothing by him; in the sustaining and support of the world and all things in it: in the redemption of his people from the hand of their powerful enemies; in beginning, carrying on, and perfecting a work of grace on their hearts by his Spirit and power; and in the preservation of them unto eternal life, through a thousand dangers and difficulties: at his resurrection all power in heaven and earth were given him as Mediator; and in the latter day he will take to himself his great power and reign; and in the last day will raise the dead out of their graves;

his understanding [is] infinite; it reaches to all things, not to the stars of heaven only, as in (^{BEZ} Psalm 147:4), but to the fowls of the air, to the beasts of the field, and cattle upon a thousand hills; to all on the surface of the earth, or in the bowels of it; and to the fishes of the sea: it reaches to all men, and to all the thoughts of their hearts, the words of their mouths, and the actions of their lives; it reaches to all things past, that have been, to everything present, and to whatsoever is to come; it includes not only the knowledge of all things that are, or certainly will be, but of all things possible, or which he could bring into being if he would; it is concerned not only with the quality and nature of things it perfectly understands, but with the quantity of them; even all things in creation and providence, which are without number and past finding out by men; and so his understanding is without number, and cannot be declared, as the word signifies.

Ver. 6. *The Lord lifteth up the meek*, etc.] The lowly and humble souls, such as are made so by the Spirit of God; he shows them their sinfulness, and want of righteousness; the insufficiency of their own, and need of Christ’s; blowing a blast upon all their goodliness, so bringing down their natural pride and haughtiness, and causing them to submit to Christ, that he alone might be exalted; such as learn of him, who is meek and lowly, and become the followers of the humble Jesus; who being partakers of his grace, have low thoughts of themselves, as if the least of saints and chief of sinners; and higher thoughts of others; who ascribe all they have and are to the grace of God; and who make no boast of nor place any trust in anything they do; who quietly submit to every adversity; patiently bear all the injuries, affronts, and reproaches of men; and are silent under every afflictive dispensation of Providence: these humble ones the Lord exalts in due time; he lifts up their spirits, he cheers and refreshes their souls; raises them to a high estate of grace, sets them among princes, gives them honour

here, and a crown and kingdom hereafter; these shall inherit the new earth, in which will dwell righteousness; (see ^{<4185>}Matthew 5:5);

he casteth the wicked down to the ground; or “humbles them to the ground”^{f1954}; he abases the proud and brings them into a low estate, sometimes in this world; however in the next he casts them down to hell, even into the lowest hell, which is the portion of all wicked men, of all proud and haughty sinners; (see ^{<2365>}Isaiah 26:5); compare with these expressions (^{<4051>}Luke 1:51,52 14:11 18:14). Aben Ezra by the “meek” understands the outcasts of Israel, and by the “wicked” the kings of the Gentiles, subject to Israel.

Ver. 7. *Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving*, etc.] These are the words of the psalmist unto the Israelites, according to Aben Ezra and Kimchi; but may be an exhortation to all men, especially good men; who are capable of observing the following things concerning providential goodness and special grace, on account of which they are called upon to “sing unto the Lord”: or to “answer”^{f1955}; to sing alternately, or by responses; the word is used for singing, (^{<3215>}Hosea 2:15); (see ^{<4052>}Exodus 15:21); and intends vocal singing, as the next clause instrumental singing, as Kimchi observes. However, the Lord is the object of it, to whom praise is to be sung for all the great and good things done by him, and that “with thanksgiving” to God for them; which, though a distinct thing from singing, and may be done without it, as in prayer; yet singing ought never to be without that; (see ^{<4159>}Ephesians 5:19,20);

sing praise upon the harp unto our God; an instrument of music used in the times of the Old Testament; an emblem of the heart, and of making melody in it to the Lord: the hearts of believers are the harps of God, on and with which they sing unto him, when they sing aright, and these are in proper tune.

Ver. 8. *Who covereth the heaven with clouds*, etc.] Which are exhalations of vapours out of the earth, and of waters out of the sea, by the sun, and formed into clouds; which are carried about in the air, and let down in showers of rain upon the earth, in proper places, for the good of the inhabitants; and sometimes, when necessary, the heavens are covered and become black with them, as in the times of Ahab, (^{<2185>}2 Kings 18:35); and though they look dark, dull, and melancholy, yet are for great usefulness: hereby, as it follows, rain is prepared for the earth, to make it fruitful, to bring forth an increase for men and beasts; and is a wonderful display of

the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, for which he is to be praised. This may be either an emblem of afflictive dispensations of Providence, which sometimes make a dark and cloudy day, a day of clouds and thick darkness; especially when the Lord covers himself with a cloud, or hides his face from his people; their sins, as clouds interposing between him and them; and yet these afflictions and desertions, though not joyous, but grievous, tend to make the saints more holy, humble, and fruitful: or else of the churches being supplied with Gospel ministers; the “heaven”, and so the “kingdom of heaven”, often signifies the church of God or Christ; consisting of men, partakers of the heavenly calling, being born from above; and in which the Gospel and ordinances, that come from heaven, are ministered; and which, for the communion had with God, and the privileges of it, is as it were the suburbs and gate of heaven. Ministers of the word are “clouds” full of the rain of heavenly and evangelic doctrine, which they drop and distil as the rain and dew upon the mown grass; and the covering the heavens with them may denote the plenty of them, or a sufficient number of them, as in the first times of the Gospel: all which are of God, who gives to his churches pastors after his own heart; and commands and directs those where to drop the rain of doctrine, and where not, for which he is to be praised; see (²³⁸⁶ Isaiah 5:6);

who prepareth rain for the earth; which is purely his preparation, production, and gift, to water the earth and make it fruitful, and is what none of the vanities or idols of the Gentiles could give; and what he prepares in the clouds, the heavens are covered with: to this the word of God and the evangelic doctrine is compared, because of its original; it is of God, and from heaven; it is dispensed and falls by divine direction, and sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; and often in great plenty, as at the first, so in the last times of the Gospel dispensation; and brings many blessings of grace and goodness with it; and, like rain, is cooling, softening, refreshing, and fructifying; and this is prepared of God, and ordained by him before the world was, for the good of his people; (see ¹⁸³⁰ Deuteronomy 32:2 ²³⁵⁰ Isaiah 55:10,11) (⁴⁸⁸⁶ 1 Corinthians 2:6);

who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains; which would be otherwise dry and barren; but, by the clouds letting down rain upon them, grass grows on them for the cattle on a thousand hills. “Mountains”, in a figurative sense, signify churches, high, strong, well-rounded, visible, and where God makes a feast of fat things for his people, (²³⁷⁶ Isaiah 25:6); “grass” denotes true believers, they of the city which flourish like grass; to

which they are like, for their weakness in themselves, their number, verdure, and fruitfulness, and for their growth in the church; which is greatly owing to the Gospel and ordinances as means, the ram of Gospel doctrine, the pure, sincere, and unadulterated word of God; by which souls grow in grace, and in the knowledge of divine things; (see ~~<9726>~~ Psalm 72:16 ~~<6101>~~ Revelation 9:4 ~~<6111>~~ 1 Peter 2:2,3).

Ver. 9. *He giveth to the beast his food*, etc.] Through the plenty of grass growing upon the mountains, by the rain falling from the clouds of heaven upon them: these cannot provide for themselves, but the Lord feeds them; and they wait upon him for their food, and receive it of him, (~~<19427>~~ Psalm 104:27,28). How much more will he feed his own people, both with temporal and spiritual food; though in their fallen state they are become like the beasts, of which they are sensible when called by grace, and own and acknowledge it! (~~<19492>~~ Psalm 49:12 73:22 ~~<18102>~~ Proverbs 30:2);

[and] to the young ravens which cry: which are particularly mentioned, because contemptible creatures, and of no use and service to men, and by the ceremonial law were impure to the Jews; and the rather, because, as naturalists observe, they are very early turned out of their nests, or forsaken by their dams: and this particular instance of the care of Providence is elsewhere observed, (~~<18384>~~ Job 38:41 ~~<21724>~~ Luke 12:24). Arama takes notice of the preservation of this creature in the ark, and the use of it to Elijah. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, “that call upon him”; that is, upon God and to him; they are expressly said to cry, (~~<18384>~~ Job 38:41). The ancient fathers interpret this figuratively; and by the “ravens” understand the Gentiles; and by their “young ones” Christians that spring from them, who call upon the true God.

Ver. 10. *He delighteth not in the strength of the horse*, etc.] It has been his will and pleasure to give the horse strength for the use and service of men, both for labour and war; and as this is a creature of his, and the work of his hands, it must be agreeable to him, (~~<18399>~~ Job 39:19) yet a horse, though prepared for the battle, is a vain thing for safety, which is only of the Lord; neither can it deliver any by its great strength; nor are a king and his country saved by the multitude of an host, or by a large cavalry: nor are these what the Lord delights in, nor does he save men for the sake of them; though a well-mounted cavalry may be a pleasing sight to men, and they may raise their expectations, and promise themselves great things from

them; yet these are of no account with God, who can save as well without them as with them, (^{<2123>}Proverbs 21:31 ^{<49316>}Psalms 33:16,17). The Targum is,

“he delighteth not in the strength of those that ride on horses;”

that are well mounted, and pride themselves in it; and are equipped for war, and are mighty to engage in it, and prepared to make their escape in danger: Kimchi’s note is,

“he delighteth not in man, who puts his confidence in the strength of the horse;”

(see ^{<4918>}Psalms 20:8 ^{<2310>}Isaiah 31:1);

he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man; in which his strength lies, and of which he is apt to glory; but should not, it being displeasing to God; who delights not therein, but in lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, (^{<2423>}Jeremiah 9:23,24); not in the legs of a man of war, as Arama; which are strong to stand his ground, or swift to flee away when hard-pressed; (see ^{<3124>}Amos 2:14,15); so the Targum,

“he takes no pleasure in the legs of men that run;”

that are swift to run races, or to flee in battle; to this sense are the notes of Jarchi and Kimchi. It seems to intend the infantry in an army, as the cavalry before; and both intimate that neither horse nor foot are to be trusted in for safety, how pleasing or promising they may be, since God seeth not as man does: or reference may be had to athletic exercises of horse and foot races, of wrestling, combats, etc. men may delight in, but God does not. What are pleasing to him are exercises of a spiritual kind; such as fleeing to Jesus, the strong tower; running the Christian race, to obtain the incorruptible crown; wrestling against principalities and powers, and such acts of grace as are next mentioned.

Ver. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him*, etc.] With a filial and godly fear; that serve and worship him, privately and publicly, with reverence and love: as, appears by the goodness he lays up for them; the good things he communicates to them; the discoveries of his love, covenant, and grace, they have from him; the guard he sets about them; his eye of providence and grace over them; and his heart full of love, pity, and compassion to them; (see ^{<49318>}Psalms 33:18);

in those that hope in his mercy; not general, but special; not in the absolute mercy of God, but as displayed in Christ; and great encouragement there is to hope in it, from the plenty of it in his heart, from the instances of it among men, and from the blessings of grace and salvation that spring from it: and in such the Lord takes pleasure; hope is his own grace, and mercy is his delight; and he is pleased with those that exercise hope upon it: not that the graces of fear and hope, and the exercise of them, are the cause and motives of God's delight in his people, which, as they were considered in Christ, was before the world was, or those graces were in them; but these describe and point out the persons who are openly and manifestly the objects of his delight and pleasure. Plutarch^{f1956}, an, Heathen writer, seems to have been acquainted with this and (~~4970~~ Psalm 147:10), and to refer to them, when he says,

“it is somewhere said, that God is not a lover of horses, nor of birds, but of men, and desires to dwell with those that are eminently good; nor does he refuse nor despise the familiar converse of a man divine and wise.”

Ver. 12. *Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem*, etc.] The inhabitants of it, as Kimchi; not Jerusalem in a literal sense, for this respects future time, as Aben Ezra; the world to come, the times of the Messiah: and intends the spiritual Jerusalem, as Arama; that which is free, the mother of us all; the Gospel church, and the members of it; which have great reason to praise the Lord, for their special blessings and peculiar privileges; (see ~~4045~~ Galatians 4:26,27 ~~4822~~ Hebrews 12:22, 23);

praise thy God, O Zion; not the house and family of David, as R. Obadiah; nor the priests and Levites in the temple, as others; but the same as before, the church and people of God; the Mount Zion God has loved and chose for his habitation; the city of our solemnities in Gospel times; the perfection of beauty and joy of the whole earth; whose God and King is Christ; and whom Zion and all her children should praise, being her incarnate God, Immanuel, God manifest in the flesh. With this verse, the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, begin the psalm.

Ver. 13. *For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates*, etc.] Of Jerusalem, of Zion the church of God. Gates are for the letting in of persons into the city of our God; which are Christ, faith in him, and a profession of it; (see ~~2301~~ Isaiah 26:1,2), “bars” are for the security of those that, are in it, and to keep out the enemy: and these, “strengthened”,

denote the utmost safety of the true members of Christ and his church; who have nothing to fear from their spiritual enemies, sin, law, Satan, the world, death, and hell: God is on their side; Christ is the munition of rocks unto them the Holy Spirit is in them, who is greater than he that is in the world; and angels are guards about them; all which is matter of praise, and a sufficient reason for it;

he hath blessed thy children within thee; multiplied them and made them fruitful, increased the number of them; even the spiritual children of the church, brought forth to Christ by her; born in her, through the ministry of the Gospel; and brought up by her, with the ordinances of it. These in the first times of the Gospel were very numerous, and will be so again in the latter day, like the drops of the morning dew; and are and will be blessed with all spiritual blessings, with pardoning, justifying, adopting, and sanctifying grace, and with eternal life; for which the Lord's name is to be praised.

Ver. 14. *He maketh peace [in] thy borders*, etc.] Which are usually most infested by enemies, It may denote the universality of peace throughout the land, in all the parts and borders of it; and be understood of the outward peace of the church with her enemies, and of the abundance and continuance of it in the latter day; and of that concord and harmony that shall be among the members of it; and also of that inward spiritual conscience peace each enjoy through believing; and which is in and from Christ, and flows from his blood and righteousness, applied for pardon and justification; and is another reason for praising the Lord;

[and] filleth thee with the finest of the wheat; or, "fat of the wheat"^{f1957}; the best of it; (see ^{<f1924>}Deuteronomy 32:14); which is the choicest of grain, and makes the best of bread, and especially the finest flour of it; and to be filled and satisfied with this, or to have enough of it, is a great temporal blessing. Here it may be understood spiritually of the Gospel, which may be compared to wheat, and the finest of it, for its excellency and purity, for its solidity and substantiality; with which the chaff of human doctrine is not to be mentioned, (^{<f1938>}Jeremiah 23:28); and for its salutary nourishing and strengthening virtue; and especially of Christ, the sum and substance of it, sometimes compared to a corn of wheat, (^{<f1924>}John 12:24); for his superior excellency to all others, and the purity of his nature; for his great fruitfulness, and for being suitable food to his people; the bread of life, for which he is prepared by his sufferings and death; which may be signified by

the beating out of the corn, and grinding the wheat, and making it into bread, fit for use: and for this spiritual food believers are abundantly thankful, and have reason to praise the Lord.

Ver. 15. *He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth*, etc.] Which Kimchi interprets of rain, which causes the wheat to grow; since afterwards mention is made of snow, and of hoar frost and ice. Aben Ezra understands it of the decree of God, which he executes on earth. The Targum, of the “Memra”, or Word of the Lord; the essential Word, the Messiah; whom the Lord sent on earth to perform the great work of redemption and salvation; and who came speedily, and tarried not when the fulness of time was come, as follows. It may design God’s word of providence, which answers to his word of power in the first creation of all things; and which orders everything done in the earth, and is instantly obeyed; which agrees with (^{<4178>}Psalm 147:18 148:8). Or rather the word of the Gospel; the doctrines and ordinances of divine revelation, agreeably to (^{<4179>}Psalm 147:19,20); and so may have respect to the mission of the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the word, to go into all the earth, and preach the Gospel to every creature;

his word runneth very swiftly; so the Gospel did in the first times of it, like lightning, from one end of the heaven to the other; the words of it went into all the world, and the sound of it unto the ends of the earth; it had a free course, and was glorified: and so it will in the latter day, when many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased; (see ^{<4108>}Romans 10:18 ^{<3101>}2 Thessalonians 3:1 ^{<2114>}Daniel 12:4).

Ver. 16. *He giveth snow like wool*, etc.] For colour as white as wool; so the Targum and Kimchi: and for the manner of its falling, lightly and gently as a lock of wool; which for its thinness and fineness it also resembles. Hence the ancients used to call snow **επιωδες υδωρ**, “woolly water”^{f1958}; and Martial^{f1959} gives it the name of “densum veilus aquarum”, “a thick fleece of waters”: so another poet^{f1960} calls clouds flying fleeces of wool, to which they sometimes seem like; Pliny^{f1961} calls it the from of the celestial waters. And it is like wool for its usefulness to the earth; for as wool covers the sheep, and clothes made of it cover men, and keep them warm; so snow filling upon the earth covers it and keeps it warm, and secures the wheat and other fruits of the earth from the injuries of the cold: and this lies among the treasures of the Lord, and he brings it out from thence, and commands it to be on the earth; and it is an useful gift of his providence,

for which his name is to be praised; (see ^{<8306>}Job 37:6 38:22). The Jews have a saying, as Arama observes, that one day of snow is better than five of rain. In the third year of Valens and Valentinianus, with the Atrebatas (a people in the Netherlands), real wool fell from the clouds, mixed with rain ^{f1962}. Several blessings of grace are signified by this figure; as pardon of sin, the justifying righteousness of Christ, and the efficacy of the word of God, (^{<3507>}Psalm 51:7 ^{<2018>}Isaiah 1:18 55:10,11 ^{<2507>}Lamentations 4:7);

he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes; which is the dew congealed by the intense cold of the air in the night season ^{f1963}: this for its colour looks like ashes, and for its infinite number of particles may be compared to them; which are spread here and there, and everywhere; over gardens, fields, lands, herbs, plants, and trees, as if they were strewed with ashes. And to hot ashes it may be compared, because of its burning nature, shrivelling up leaves, herbs, and plants, as if burnt; hence called “pruina” in the Latin tongue ^{f1964}. The manna is compared to this for its smallness, (^{<0264>}Exodus 16:14); which was typical of Christ, the hidden manna, and of the ministry of the Gospel; little, mean, and contemptible, in the eyes of carnal men; torturing and tormenting to them, as the fire that came out of the mouths of the witnesses; and is the savour of death unto death to some, while it is the savour of life unto life to others.

Ver. 17. *He casteth forth his ice like morsels*, etc.] Divided like morsels, as the Targum; cut into pieces, like morsels of bread. This seems to have respect to hail stones, which sometimes fall like pieces of ice, and are very prejudicial to the fruits of the earth: this was one of the ten plagues of Egypt; and whereby also many of the Canaanites were destroyed in the times of Joshua, (^{<0123>}Exodus 9:23 ^{<6101>}Joshua 10:11); and there is an exceeding great storm of hail yet to come, very dreadful; (see ^{<6121>}Revelation 16:21). This is expressive of the wrath, vengeance, and judgments of God upon men, by which he is known in various perfections of his nature; as his power, justice, and holiness, for which he is celebrated, (^{<2330>}Isaiah 30:30);

who can stand before his cold? which he has purposed and promised shall be; for he has said, that “cold and heat [shall not] cease, [as long as] the earth remains”; and which he appoints and orders to be, for “by the breath of God frost is given”, (^{<0082>}Genesis 8:22 ^{<3870>}Job 37:10); and this is sometimes and in some places so very vehement, that it is intolerable; men are obliged to keep within doors, to make them fires, and put on more

clothes; and the “hands” of every man are sealed up from business; even “the beasts go into [their] dens, [and] remain in their places”, or get what shelter they can; (see ^{<B70>}Job 37:7,8). And if there is no standing before his cold, who can stand before the heat of his anger, or his furious wrath and indignation, when it is poured out like fire? (see ^{<B70>}Psalm 76:7 Na 1:5,6 ^{<B70>}Revelation 6:15-17).

Ver. 18. *He sendeth out his word, and melteth them*, etc.] The snow, the hoar frost, and ice: this he does by a word of his, who can freeze the earth and waters, and thaw them at his pleasure; by ordering the sun to break forth with great heat, or rain to fall in great plenty; of both which Kimchi interprets his word; as well as by causing a warm wind to blow, as follows,

he causeth his wind to blow, [and] the waters to flow: the south wind particularly; then the waters, which were still and motionless, flow as before, or more abundantly. Thus the hearts of men in a state of nature are like frozen earth or waters; they are cold, and without the heat of love, and affection to God and Christ, and spiritual things; they are as hard as a stone, and without any motion or desire after things divine and heavenly: but when the Lord sends his word, attended with a divine power and efficacy, it breaks and melts them; when the south wind of the blessed Spirit blows upon them, or his grace becomes effectual in convincing them of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and when the sun of righteousness arises on them with healing in his wings; with which being warmed, they are loosened, and flow to the Lord and his goodness for all spiritual blessings.

Ver. 19. *He showeth his word unto Jacob*, etc.] From the things of nature and providence, the psalmist passes to the blessings of grace and goodness; for which the Lord is to be praised, particularly for his word and ordinances. The Targum interprets this of the words of the law; and indeed the law, or decalogue, was given only to the Israelites, the posterity of Jacob; as also the ceremonial and judicial laws; and even the whole Scripture, the oracles of God, were committed to them in a very peculiar manner: all which distinguished them from the Gentiles, and gave them the preference to them; (see ^{<B70>}Deuteronomy 4:6-8) (^{<B70>}Romans 3:1,2 9:4). But the Gospel part of the word is also included; the word of grace, peace, reconciliation, righteousness, eternal life, and salvation, which was first published to the Jews: it was “shown” unto them, for it cannot be known by any without a revelation; the Gospel, and the things of it, are hidden

things to natural men, and could never have been discerned by any, had they not been shown by the Lord; as they are externally in the ministration of the word, and internally and effectually by the Spirit of God; who is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine things;

his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; the ordinances of divine worship under the former dispensation, which were peculiar to literal Israel; and those of the Gospel dispensation, which belong to the spiritual Israel, Jews and Gentiles; and which are shown and directed to in the word, to be observed by them; and both the Gospel and the ordinances of it are instances of divine favour, for which the Lord is to be praised.

Ver. 20. *He hath not dealt so with any nation*, etc.] Or “every nation”^{f1965}; or all the nations under the heavens; only with the Jewish nation: these only for many hundreds of years were favoured with the divine revelation, with the word and ordinances of God; with the law, and with the Gospel, and with the service and worship of God; as well as with promises and prophecies of Christ, and good things to come by him. These were not communicated to anyone nation or body of people besides them; only now and then, to one here and there among the Gentiles: the Gospel was first preached to them at the coming of Christ, and after them to the Gentiles, when rejected by them;

and [as for his] judgments, they have not known them; by which are meant, not the providential dispensations of God, which are unsearchable, and past finding out, till made manifest; nor punishments inflicted on wicked men, unobserved by them; but the word of God, and the ordinances of it, which the Gentile world for many ages were unacquainted with; (see ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 19:9);

praise ye the Lord: as literal Israel had reason to do, for those distinguishing instances of his favour and goodness; and as the spiritual Israel of God everywhere have; and particularly our British ones, who are highly favoured with the privileges of having the word of God purely and powerfully preached, and his ordinances truly and duly administered; at least in some parts of it, and that more than in any other nation under the heavens.