

## PSALM XVI.

**TITLE.**—MIGHTAM OF DAVID. *This is usually understood to mean the GOLDEN PSALM, and such a title is most appropriate, for the matter is as the most fine gold. Ainsworth calls it "David's jewel, or notable song." Dr. Hawker, who is always alive to passages full of savour, devoutly cries, "Some have rendered it precious, others golden, and others, precious jewel; and as the Holy Ghost, by the apostles Peter and Paul, hath shown us that it is all about the Lord Jesus Christ, what is here said of him is precious, is golden, is a jewel indeed!" We have not met with the term Michtam before, but if spared to write upon Psalms lvi., lvii., lviii., lix. and lx., we shall see it again, and shall observe that like the present these Psalms, although they begin with prayer, and imply trouble, abound in holy confidence and close with songs of assurance as to ultimate safety and joy. Dr. Alexander, whose notes are peculiarly valuable, thinks that the word is most probably a simple derivative of a word signifying to hide, and signifies a secret or mystery, and indicates the depth of doctrinal and spiritual import in these sacred compositions. If this be the true interpretation it well accords with the other, and when the two are put together, they make up a name which every reader will remember, and which will bring the precious subject at once to mind. THE PSALM OF THE PRECIOUS SECRET.*

**SUBJECT.**—We are not left to human interpreters for the key to this golden mystery, for, speaking by the Holy Ghost, Peter tells us, "David speaketh concerning Him." (Acts ii. 25). Further on in his memorable sermon he said, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." (Acts ii. 29—31.) Nor is this our only guide, for the apostle Paul, led by the same infallible inspiration, quotes from this Psalm, and testifies that David wrote of the man through whom is preached unto us the forgiveness of sins. (Acts xiii. 35—8.) It has been the usual plan of commentators to apply the Psalm both to David, to the saints, and to the Lord Jesus, but we will venture to believe that in it "Christ is all;" since in the ninth and tenth verses, like the apostles on the mount, we can see "no man but Jesus only."

**DIVISION.**—The whole is so compact that it is difficult to draw sharp lines of division. It may suffice to note our Lord's prayer of faith, verse 1, a renewal of faith in Jehovah alone, 2, 3, 4, 5, the contentment of his faith in the present, 6, 7, and the joyous confidence of his faith for the future (8, 11.)

### EXPOSITION.

**PRESERVE** me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

"Preserve me," keep, or save me, or as Horsley thinks, "guard me," even as body-guards surround their monarch, or as shepherds protect their flocks. Tempted in all points like as we are, the manhood of Jesus needed to be preserved from the power of evil; and though in itself pure, the Lord Jesus did not confide in that purity of nature, but as an example to his followers, looked to the Lord, his God, for preservation. One of the great names of God is "the Preserver of men," (Job vii. 20), and this gracious office the Father exercised towards our Mediator and Representative. It had been promised to the Lord Jesus in express words, that he should be preserved, Isa. xlix. 7, 8. "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people." This promise was to the letter fulfilled, both by providential deliverance and sustaining power, in the case of our Lord. Being preserved himself, he is able to restore the preserved of Israel, for we are "preserved in Christ Jesus and called." As one with him, the elect were preserved in his preservation, and we may view this mediatorial

supplication as the petition of the Great High Priest for all those who are in him. The intercession recorded in John xvii. is but an amplification of this cry, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*." When he says "preserve me," he means his members, his mystical body, himself, and all in him. But while we rejoice in the fact that the Lord Jesus used this prayer for his members, we must not forget that he employed it most surely for himself; he had so emptied himself, and so truly taken upon him the form of a servant, that as man he needed divine keeping even as we do, and often cried unto the strong for strength. Frequently on the mountain-top he breathed forth this desire, and on one occasion in almost the same words, he publicly prayed, "Father, save me from this hour." (John xii. 27.) If Jesus looked out of himself for protection, how much more must we, his erring followers, do so!

"*O God.*" The word for God here used in *EL*, by which name the Lord Jesus, when under a sense of great weakness, as for instance when upon the cross, was wont to address the Mighty God, the Omnipotent Helper of his people. We, too, may turn to *El*, the Omnipotent One, in all hours of peril, with the confidence that he who heard the strong cryings and tears of our faithful High Priest, is both able and willing to bless us in him. It is well to study the name and character of God, so that in our straits we may know how and by what title to address our Father who is in heaven.

"*For in thee do I put my trust,*" or, *I have taken shelter in thee.* As chickens run beneath the hen, so do I betake myself to thee. Thou art my great overshadowing Protector, and I have taken refuge beneath thy strength. This is a potent argument in pleading, and our Lord knew not only how to use it with God, but how to yield to its power when wielded by others upon himself. "According to thy faith be it done unto thee," is a great rule of heaven in dispensing favour, and when we can sincerely declare that we exercise faith in the Mighty God with regard to the mercy which we seek, we may rest assured that our plea will prevail. Faith, like the sword of Saul, never returns empty; it overcomes heaven when held in the hand of prayer. As the Saviour prayed, so let us pray, and as he became more than a conqueror, so shall we also through him; let us when buffeted by storms right bravely cry to the Lord as he did, "in thee do I put my trust."

2 *O my soul*, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: my goodness *extendeth* not to thee:

3 *But* to the saints that *are* in the earth, and *to* the excellent, in whom *is* all my delight.

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* hasten *after* another *god*: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

5 The LORD *is* the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

"*O my soul*, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord." In his inmost heart the Lord Jesus bowed himself to do service to his Heavenly Father, and before the throne of Jehovah his soul vowed allegiance to the Lord for our sakes. We are like him when our soul, truly and constantly in the presence of the heart-searching God, declares her full consent to the rule and government of the Infinite Jehovah, saying, "Thou art my Lord." To avow this with the lip is little, but for the *soul* to say it, especially in times of trial, is a gracious evidence of spiritual health; to profess it before men is a small matter, but to declare it before Jehovah himself is of far more consequence. This sentence may also be viewed as the utterance of appropriating faith, laying hold upon the Lord by personal covenant and enjoyment; in this sense may it be our daily song in the house of our pilgrimage.

"*My goodness extendeth not to thee.*" The work of our Lord Jesus was not needful on account of any necessity in the Divine Being. Jehovah would have been inconceivably glorious had the human race perished, and had no atonement been offered. Although the life-work and death-agony of the Son did reflect unparalleled lustre upon every attribute of God, yet the Most Blessed and Infinitely Happy God stood in no need of the obedience and death of his Son; it was for our sakes that the work of redemption was undertaken, and not because of any lack or want on the part of the Most High. How modestly does the Saviour here estimate his

own goodness! What overwhelming reasons have we for imitating his humility! "If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?" (Job xxxv. 7.)

"But to the saints that are in the earth." These sanctified ones, although still upon the earth, partake of the results of Jesus' mediatorial work, and by his goodness are made what they are. The peculiar people, zealous for good works, and hallowed to sacred service, are arrayed in the Saviour's righteousness and washed in his blood, and so receive of the goodness treasured up in him; these are the persons who are profited by the work of the man Christ Jesus; but that work added nothing to the nature, virtue, or happiness of God, who is blessed for evermore. How much more forcibly is this true of us, poor unworthy servants, not fit to be mentioned in comparison with the faithful Son of God! Our hope must ever be that haply some poor child of God may be served by us, for the Great Father can never need our aid. Well may we sing the verses of Dr. Watts:

"Oft have my heart and tongue confess'd  
How empty and how poor I am;  
My praise can never make thee blest,  
Nor add new glories to thy name.  
Yet, Lord, thy saints on earth may reap  
Some profit by the good we do;  
These are the company I keep,  
These are the choicest friends I know."

Poor believers are God's receivers, and have a warrant from the Crown to receive the revenue of our offerings in the King's name. Saints departed we cannot bless; even prayer for them is of no service; but while they are here we should practically prove our love to them, even as our Master did, for they are *the excellent of the earth*. Despite their infirmities, their Lord thinks highly of them, and reckons them to be as nobles among men. The title of "His Excellency" more properly belongs to the meanest saint than to the greatest governor. The true aristocracy are believers in Jesus. They are the only Right Honourables. Stars and garters are poor distinctions compared with the graces of the Spirit. He who knows them best says of them, "*in whom is all my delight.*" They are his Hephzibah and his land Beulah, and before all worlds his delights were with these chosen sons of men. Their own opinion of themselves is far other than their Beloved's opinion of them; they count themselves to be less than nothing, yet he makes much of them, and sets his heart towards them. What wonders the eyes of Divine Love can see were the hands of Infinite Power have been graciously at work. It was this quicksighted affection which led Jesus to see in us a recompense for all his agony, and sustained him under all his sufferings by the joy of redeeming us from going down into the pit.

The same loving heart which opens towards the chosen people is fast closed against those who continue in their rebellion against God. Jesus hates all wickedness, and especially the high crime of idolatry. The text while it shows our Lord's abhorrence of sin, shows also the sinner's greediness after it. Professed believers are often slow towards the true Lord, but sinners "*hasten after another god.*" They run like madmen where we creep like snails. Let their zeal rebuke our tardiness. Yet theirs is a case in which the more they haste the worse they speed, for *their sorrows are multiplied* by their diligence in multiplying their sins. Matthew Henry pithily says, "They that multiply gods multiply griefs to themselves; for whosoever thinks one god too little, will find two too many, and yet hundreds not enough." The cruelties and hardships which men endure for their false gods is wonderful to contemplate; our missionary reports are a noteworthy comment on this passage; but perhaps our own experience is an equally vivid exposition; for when we have given our heart to idols, sooner or later we have had to smart for it. Near the roots of our self-love all our sorrows lie, and when that idol is overthrown, the sting is gone from grief. Moses broke the golden calf and ground it to powder, and cast it into the water of which he made Israel to drink, and so shall our cherished idols become bitter portions for us, unless we at once forsake them. Our Lord had no selfishness; he served but one Lord, and served him only. As for those who turn aside from Jehovah, he was separate from them, bearing their reproach without the camp. Sin and the Saviour had no communion. He came to destroy, not to patronize or be allied with the works of the devil. Hence he refused the testimony of unclean spirits as to his divinity, for in nothing would he have fellowship with darkness. We should be careful above measure not to connect



ourselves in the remotest degree with falsehood in religion ; even the most solemn of Popish rites we must abhor. " *Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer.*" The old proverb says, " It is not safe to cat at the devil's mess, though the spoon be never so long." The mere mentioning of ill names it were well to avoid,— "*nor take up their names into my lips.*" If we allow poison upon the lip, it may ere long penetrate to the inwards, and it is well to keep out of the mouth that which we would shut out from the heart. If the Church would enjoy union with Christ, she must break all the bonds of impiety, and keep herself pure from all the pollutions of carnal will-worship, which now pollute the service of God. Some professors are guilty of great sin in remaining in the communion of Popish churches, where God is as much dishonoured as in Rome herself, only in a more crafty manner.

" *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup.*" With what confidence and bounding joy does Jesus turn to Jehovah, whom his soul possessed and delighted in ! Content beyond measure with his portion in the Lord his God, he had not a single desire with which to hunt after other gods ; his cup was full, and his heart was full too ; even in his sorest sorrows he still laid hold with both his hands upon his Father, crying, " My God, my God ; " he had not so much as a thought of falling down to worship the prince of this world, although tempted with an " all these will I give thee." We, too, can make our boast in the Lord ; he is the meat and the drink of our souls. He is our portion, supplying all our necessities, and our cup yielding royal luxuries ; our cup in this life, and our inheritance in the life to come. As children of the Father who is in heaven, we inherit, by virtue of our joint heirship with Jesus, all the riches of the covenant of grace ; and the portion which falls to us sets upon our table the bread of heaven and the new wine of the kingdom. Who would not be satisfied with such dainty diet ? Our shallow cup of sorrow we may well drain with resignation, since the deep cup of love stands side by side with it, and will never be empty. "*Thou maintainest my lot.*" Some tenants have a covenant in their leases that they themselves shall maintain and uphold, but in our case Jehovah himself maintains our lot. Our Lord Jesus delighted in this truth, that the Father was on his side, and would maintain his right against all the wrongs of men. He knew that his elect would be reserved for him, and that almighty power would preserve them as his lot and reward for ever. Let us also be glad, because the Judge of all the earth will vindicate our righteous cause.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant *places* ; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel : my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

Jesus found the way of obedience to lead into "*pleasant places.*" Notwithstanding all the sorrows which marred his countenance, he exclaimed, " Lo, I come ; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God : yea, thy law is within my heart." It may seem strange, but while no other man was ever so thoroughly acquainted with grief, it is our belief that no other man ever experienced so much joy and delight in service, for no other served so faithfully and with such great results in view as his recompense of reward. The joy which was set before him must have sent some of its beams of splendour a-down the rugged places where he endured the cross, despising the shame, and must have made them in some respects pleasant places to the generous heart of the Redeemer. At any rate, we know that Jesus was well content with the blood-bought portion which the lines of electing love marked off as his spoil with the strong and his portion with the great. Therein he solaced himself on earth, and delights himself in heaven ; and he asks no more "*GOODLY HERITAGE*" than that his own beloved may be with him where he is and behold his glory. All the saints can use the language of this verse, and the more thoroughly they can enter into its contented, grateful, joyful spirit the better for themselves, and the more glorious to their God. Our Lord was poorer than we are, for he had not where to lay his head, and yet when he mentioned his poverty he never used a word of murmuring ; discontented spirits are as unlike Jesus as the croaking raven is unlike the cooing dove. Martyrs have been happy in dungeons. " From the delectable orchard of the Leonine prison the Italian martyr dated his letter, and the presence of God made the gridiron of Laurence pleasant to him." Mr. Greenham was bold enough to say, " They never felt God's

love, or tasted forgiveness of sins, who are discontented." Some divines think that discontent was the first sin, the rock which wrecked our race in paradise; certainly there can be no paradise where this evil spirit has power, its slime will poison all the flowers of the garden.

"*I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel.*" Praise as well as prayer was presented to the Father by our Lord Jesus, and we are not truly his followers unless our resolve be, "*I will bless the Lord.*" Jesus is called Wonderful, Counsellor, but as man he spake not of himself, but as his Father had taught him. Read in confirmation of this, John vii. 16; viii. 28; and xii. 49, 50; and the prophecy concerning him in Isaiah xi. 2, 3. It was our Redeemer's wont to repair to his Father for direction, and having received it, he blessed him for giving him counsel. It would be well for us if we would follow his example of lowliness, cease from trusting in our own understanding, and seek to be guided by the Spirit of God. "*My reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*" By the reins understand the inner man, the affections and feelings. The communion of the soul with God brings to it an inner spiritual wisdom which in still seasons is revealed to itself. Our Redeemer spent many nights alone upon the mountain, and we may readily conceive that together with his fellowship with heaven, he carried on a profitable commerce with himself; reviewing his experience, forecasting his work, and considering his position. Great generals fight their battles in their own mind long before the trumpet sounds, and so did our Lord win our battle on his knees before he gained it on the cross. It is a gracious habit after taking counsel from above to take counsel within. Wise men see more with their eyes shut by night than fools can see by day with their eyes open. He who learns from God and so gets the seed, will soon find wisdom within himself growing in the garden of his soul; "*Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left.*" The night season which the sinner chooses for his sins is the hallowed hour of quiet when believers hear the soft still voices of heaven, and of the heavenly life within themselves.

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

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth : my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy presence *is* fulness of joy ; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

The fear of death at one time cast its dark shadow over the soul of the Redeemer, and we read that "he was heard in that he feared." There appeared unto him an angel, strengthening him; perhaps the heavenly messenger reassured him of his glorious resurrection as his people's surety, and of the eternal joy into which he should admit the flock redeemed by blood. Then hope shone full upon our Lord's soul, and, as recorded in these verses, he surveyed the future with holy confidence because he had a continued eye to Jehovah, and enjoyed his perpetual presence. He felt that thus sustained, he could never be driven from his life's grand design; nor was he, for he stayed not his hand till he could say, "It is finished." What an infinite mercy was this for us! In this immovableness, caused by simple faith in the divine help, Jesus is to be viewed as our exemplar; to recognize the presence of the Lord is the duty of every believer; "*I have set the Lord always before me;*" and to trust the Lord as our champion and guard is the privilege of every saint; "*because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*" The apostle translates this passage, "*I foresaw the Lord always before my face;*" Acts ii. 25; the eye of Jesus' faith could discern beforehand the continuance of divine support to his suffering Son, in such a degree that he should never be moved from the accomplishment of his purpose of redeeming his people. By the power of God at his right hand he foresaw that he should smite through all who rose up against him, and on that power he placed the firmest reliance. He clearly foresaw that he must die, for he speaks of his flesh resting, and of his soul in the abode of separate spirits; death was full before his face, or he would not have mentioned corruption; but such was his devout reliance upon his God, that he sang over the tomb, and rejoiced

In vision of the sepulchre. He knew that the visit of his soul to Sheol, or the invisible world of disembodied spirits, would be a very short one, and that his body in a very brief space would leave the grave, uninjured by its sojourn there; all this made him say, "*my heart is glad,*" and moved his tongue, *the glory of his frame, to rejoice in God, the strength of his salvation.* Oh for such holy faith in the prospect of trial and of death! It is the work of faith, not merely to create a peace which passeth all understanding, but to fill the heart full of gladness until the tongue, which, as the organ of an intelligent creature, is our glory, bursts forth in notes of harmonious praise. Faith gives us living joy, and bestows dying rest. "*My flesh also shall rest in hope.*"

Our Lord Jesus was not disappointed in his hope. He declared his Father's faithfulness in the words, "*thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,*" and that faithfulness was proven on the resurrection morning. Among the departed and disembodied Jesus was not left; he had believed in the resurrection, and he received it on the third day, when his body rose in glorious life, according as he had said in joyous confidence, "*neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*" Into the outer prison of the grave his body might go, but into the inner prison of corruption he could not enter. He who in soul and body was pre-eminently God's "Holy One," was loosed from the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. This is noble encouragement to all the saints; die they must, but rise they shall, and though in their case they shall see corruption, yet they shall rise to everlasting life. Christ's resurrection is the cause, the earnest, the guarantee, and the emblem of the rising of all his people. Let them, therefore, go to their graves as to their beds, resting their flesh among the clods as they now do upon their couches.

"Since Jesus is mine, I'll not fear undressing,

But gladly put off these garments of clay;

To die in the Lord is a covenant blessing,

Since Jesus to glory through death led the way."

Wretched will that man be who, when the Philistines of death invade his soul, shall find that, like Saul, he is forsaken of God; but blessed is he who has the Lord at his right hand, for he shall fear no ill, but shall look forward to an eternity of bliss.

11.—"*Thou wilt shew me the path of life.*" To Jesus first this way was shown, for he is the first-begotten from the dead, the first-born of every creature. He himself opened up the way through his own flesh, and then trod it as the forerunner of his own redeemed. The thought of being made the path of life to his people, gladdened the soul of Jesus. "*In thy presence is fulness of joy.*" Christ being raised from the dead ascended into glory, to dwell in constant nearness to God, where joy is at its full for ever: the foresight of this urged him onward in his glorious but grievous toil. To bring his chosen to eternal happiness was the high ambition which inspired him, and made him wade through a sea of blood. O God, when the worldling's mirth has all expired, for ever with Jesus may we dwell "*at thy right hand,*" where "*there are pleasures for evermore;*" and meanwhile, may we have an earnest by tasting thy love below. Trapp's note on the heavenly verse which closes the Psalm is a sweet morsel, which may serve for a contemplation, and yield a foretaste of our inheritance. He writes, "Here is as much said as can be, but words are too weak to utter it. For *quality* there is in heaven joy and pleasures; for *quantity*, a fulness, a torrent whereat they drink without let or loathing; for *constancy*, it is at God's right hand, who is stronger than all, neither can any take us out of his hand; it is a constant happiness without intermission: and for *perpetuity* it is for evermore. Heaven's joys are without measure, mixture, or end."

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

*Title.*—There is a diversity of opinion as to the meaning of the title of this Psalm. It is called "*Michtam of David,*" but *Michtam* is the Hebrew word untranslated—the Hebrew word in English letters—and its signification is involved in obscurity. According to some, it is derived from a verb which means *to hide*, and denotes a mystery or secret. Those who adopt this view, regard the title as indicating a



depth of doctrinal and spiritual import in the Psalm, which neither the writer nor any of his contemporaries had fathomed. According to others, it is derived from a verb which means to *cut*, to *grave*, to *write*, and denotes simply a writing of David. With this view agree the Chaldee and Septuagint versions, the former translating it, "a straight sculpture of David;" and the latter, "an inscription upon a pillar to David." Others again, look upon "*Michtam*," as being derived from a noun which means gold, and they understand it as denoting a golden Psalm—a Psalm of surpassing excellence, and worthy of being written in letters of gold. This was the opinion of our translators, and hence they have rendered it on the margin—"A golden Psalm of David." The works of the most excellent Arabian poets were called golden, because they were written in letters of gold; and this golden song may have been written and hung up in some conspicuous part of the Temple. Many other interpretations have been given of this term, but at this distance of time, we can only regard it as representing some unassignable peculiarity of the composition.—*James Frame*, 1858.

*Title*.—Such are the riches of this Psalm, that some have been led to think the obscure title, "*Michtam*," has been prefixed to it on account of its *golden stores*. For מִכְתָּם is used of the "gold of Ophir" (e.g., Psalm xlv. 9), and מִכְתָּם might be a derivative from that root. But as there is a group of five other Psalms (namely, lvi., lvii., lviii., lix., lx.), that bear this title, whose subject-matter is various, but which all end in a *tone of triumph*, it has been suggested that the Septuagint may be nearly right in their Σηλογραφία, as if "A Psalm to be hung up or inscribed on a pillar to commemorate victory." It is, however, more likely still that the term "*Michtam*" (like "*Maschil*"), is a musical term, whose real meaning and use we have lost, and may recover only when the ransomed house of Israel return home with songs. Meanwhile, the subject-matter of this Psalm itself is very clearly this—the *righteous one's satisfaction with his lot*.—*Andrew A. Bonar*.

*Whole Psalm*.—Allow that in verse ten it is clear that our Lord is in this Psalm, yet the application of every verse to Jesus in *Gethsemane* appears to be far-fetched, and inaccurate. How verse nine could suit the agony and bloody sweat, it is hard to conceive, and equally so is it with regard to verse six. The "cup" of verse five is so direct a contrast to that cup concerning which Jesus prayed in anguish of spirit, that it cannot be a reference to it. Yet we think it right to add, that Mr. James Frame has written a very valuable work on this Psalm, entitled, "*Christ in Gethsemane*," and he has supported his theory by the opinion of many of the ancients. He says, "All the distinguished interpreters of ancient days, such as Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine, explain the Psalm as referring to the Messiah, in his passion and his victory over death and the grave, including his subsequent exaltation to the right hand of God;" and in a foot note he gives the following quotations: *Jerome*.—"The Psalm pertains to Christ, who speaks in it. . . . It is the voice of our King, which he utters in the human nature that he had assumed, but without detracting from his divine nature. . . . The Psalm pertains to his passion." *Augustine*.—"Our King speaks in this Psalm in the person of the human nature that he assumed, at the time of his passion, the royal title inscribed will show itself conspicuous."—*C. H. S.*

*Whole Psalm*.—The present Psalm is connected in thought and language with the foregoing, and linked on to the following Psalm by catchwords. It is entitled in the Syriac and Arabic versions, a Psalm on the Election of the Church, and on the Resurrection of Christ.—*Christopher Wordsworth, D.D.*, 1868.

*Verse 1*.—"Preserve me, O God." Here David desireth not deliverance from any special trouble, but generally prayeth to be fenced and defended continually by the providence of God, wishing that the Lord would continue his mercy towards him unto the end, and in the end; whereby he foresaw it was as needful for him to be safe guarded by God, his protection in the end, as at the time present; as also how he made no less account of it in his prosperity than in adversity. So that the man of God still feared his infirmity, and therefore acknowledgeth himself ever to stand in need of God his help. And here is a sure and undoubted mark of the child of God, when a man shall have as great a care to continue and grow in well-doing, as to begin; and this paying for the gift of final perseverance is a special note of the child of God. This holy jealousy of the man of God made him so to desire to be preserved at all times, in all estates, both in soul and body.—*Richard Greenham*, 1531—1591.

*Verse 1.*—"For in thee do I put my trust." Here the prophet setteth down the cause why he prayeth to God: whereby he declareth, that none can truly call upon God unless they believe. Rom. x. 14. "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" In regard whereof, as he prayeth to God to be his Saviour, so he is fully assured that God will be his Saviour. If, then, without faith we cannot truly call upon God, the men of this world rather prate like parrots than pray like Christians, at what time they utter these words; for that they trust not in God they declare both by neglecting the lawful means, and also in using unlawful means. Some we see trust in friends; some shoulder out, as they think, the cross with their goods; some fence themselves with authority; others bathe and baste themselves in pleasure to put the evil day far from them; others make flesh their arm; and others make the wedge of gold their confidence; and these men when they seek for help at the Lord, mean in their hearts to find it in their friends, good authority and pleasure, howsoever for fear, they dare not say this outwardly. Again, here we are to observe under what shelter we may harbour ourselves in the showers of adversity, even under the protection of the Almighty. And why? "Whoso dwelleth in the secret of the Most High, shall abide in the shadow of the Almighty." And here in effect is showed, that whosoever putteth his trust in God shall be preserved; otherwise the prophet's reason here had not been good. Besides, we see he pleadeth not by merit, but sueth by faith, teaching us that if we come with like faith, we may obtain the like deliverance.—*Richard Greenham.*

*Verse 2.*—"O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord." I wish I could have heard what you said to yourself when these words were first mentioned. I believe I could guess the language of some of you. When you heard me repeat these words, "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord," you thought, "I have never said anything to the Lord, unless when I cried out, Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Has not something like this passed in your minds? I will try again. When I first mentioned the text, "Let me consider," you secretly said, "I believe that I did once say to the Lord, Thou art my Lord; but it was so long ago, that I had almost forgotten it; but I suppose that it must have been at such a time when I was in trouble. I had met with disappointments in the world; and then, perhaps, I cried, Thou art my portion, O Lord. Or, perhaps, when I was under serious impressions, in the hurry of my spirits, I might look up to God and say, Thou art my Lord. But, whatever I could or did formerly say, I am certain that I cannot say it at present." Have none of you thought in this manner? I will hazard one conjecture more; and I doubt not but in this case I shall guess rightly. When I repeated these words, "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord;" "So have I," thought one; "So have I," thought another; I have said it often, but I said it with peculiar solemnity and pleasure, when, in an act of humble devotion, I lately threw my ransomed, rescued, grateful soul at his feet, and cried, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds." The very recollection of it is pleasant; and I shall now have an opportunity of renewing my vows, and hope to recover something of the divine serenity and joy which I at that time experienced.—*Samuel Lavington's Sermons, 1810.*

*Verse 2.*—"Thou art my Lord." He acknowledgeth the Lord Jehovah; but he seeth him not as it were then afar off, but drawing near unto him, he sweetly embraceth him; which thing is proper unto faith, and to that particular applying which we say to be in faith.—*Robert Rollock, 1600.*

*Verse 2.*—"My goodness extendeth not to thee." I think the words should be understood of what the Messiah was doing for men. My goodness, *תובחתי*, "my bounty" is not to thee. What I am doing can add nothing to thy divinity; thou art not providing this astonishing sacrifice because thou canst derive any excellence from it; but this bounty extends to the saints—to all the spirits of just men made perfect, whose bodies are still in the earth; and to the excellent, *אדירים*, "addirey," "the noble or super-eminent ones," those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. The saints and illustrious ones not only taste of my goodness, but enjoy my salvation. Perhaps angels themselves may be intended; they are not uninterested in the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord. They desire to look into these things; and the victories of the cross in the conversion of sinners cause joy among the angels of God.—*Adam Clarke.*



*Verse 2.*—"My goodness extendeth not to thee;" "My well-doing extendeth not to thee." Oh, what shall I render unto thee, my God, for all thy benefits towards me? what shall I repay? Alas! I can do thee no good, for mine imperfect goodness cannot please thee who art most perfect and goodness itself; my well-doing can do thee no good, my wickedness can do thee no harm. I receive all good from thee, but no good can I return to thee; wherefore I acknowledge thee to be most rich, and myself to be most beggarly; so far off is it that thou standest in any need of me. Wherefore I will join myself to thy people, that whatsoever I have they may profit by it; and whatsoever they have I may profit by it, seeing the things that I have received must be put out to loan, to gain some comfort to others. Whatsoever others have, they have not for their own private use, but that by them, as by pipes and conduits, they liberally should be conveyed unto me also. Wherefore in this strain we are taught, that if we be the children of God, we must join ourselves in a holy league to his people, and by mutual participation of the gifts of God, we must testify each to other, that we be of the number and communion of saints; and this is an undoubted badge and cognizance of him that loveth God, if he also loveth them that are begotten of God. Wherefore, if we so profess ourselves to be of God and to worship him, then we must join ourselves to the church of God which with us doth worship God. And this must we do of necessity, for it is a branch of our belief that there is a communion of saints in the church; and if we believe that there is a God, we must also believe that there is a remnant of people, unto whom God revealeth himself, and communicateth his mercies, in whom we must have all our delight, to whom we must communicate according to the measure of grace unto every one of us.—*Richard Greenham.*

*Verse 2.*—"My goodness extendeth not to thee." Oh, how great is God's goodness to you! He calls upon others for the same things, and conscience stands as Pharaoh's taskmasters, requiring the tale of bricks but not allowing straw; it impels and presseth, but gives no enlargement of heart, and buffets and wounds them for neglect: as the hard creditor that, taking the poor debtor by the throat, saith, "Pay me that thou owest me," but yields him no power to do it; thus God might deal with you also, for *he oweth not assistance to us*; but *we owe obedience to him*. Remember, we had power, and it is just to demand what we cannot do, because the weakness that is in us is of ourselves: we have impoverished ourselves. Therefore, when in much mercy he puts forth his hand into the work with thee, be very thankful. If the work be not done, he is no loser; if done, and well done, he is no gainer. Job xxii. 2; xxxv. 6—8. But the gain is all to thee; all the good that comes by it is to thyself.—*Joseph Symonds, 1639.*

*Verse 2 (last clause).*—It is a greater glory to us that we are allowed to serve God, than it is to him that we offer him that service. He is not rendered happy by us; but we are made happy by him. He can do without such earthly servants; but we cannot do without such a heavenly Master.—*William Secker.*

*Verse 2 (last clause).*—There is nothing added to God: he is so perfect, that no sin can hurt him; and so righteous, that no righteousness can benefit him. *O Lord, my righteousness extendeth not to thee! thou hast no need of my righteousness.* Acts xvii. 24, 25. God hath no need of anything.—*Richard Stock, 1641.*

*Verse 2.*—As Christ is the head of man, so is God the head of Christ (1 Cor. xi. 3); and as man is subject unto Christ, so is Christ subject to God; not in regard of the divine nature, wherein there is an equality, and consequently no dominion of jurisdiction; nor only in his human nature, but in the economy of a Redeemer, considered as one designed, and consenting to be incarnate, and take our flesh; so that after this agreement God had a sovereign right to dispose of him according to the articles consented to. In regard of his undertaking and the advantage he was to bring to the elect of God upon earth, he calls God by the solemn title of "his Lord." "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth." It seems to be the speech of Christ in heaven, mentioning the saints on earth as at a distance from him. I can add nothing to the glory of thy majesty, but the whole fruit of my meditation and suffering will redound to the saints on earth.—*Stephen Charnock.*

*Verses 2, 3.*—"My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints." God's goodness to us should make us merciful to others. It were strange indeed a soul should come out of his tender bosom with a hard uncharitable heart. Some children do not indeed take after their earthly parents, as Cicero's son, who had nothing of his father but his name; but God's children all partake of their heavenly Father's

nature. Philosophy tells us, that there is no reaction from the earth to the heavens ; they indeed shed their influences upon the lower world, which quicken and fructify it, but the earth returns none back to make the sun shine the better. David knew that *his goodness extendeth not unto God*, but this made him reach it forth to his brethren. Indeed, God hath left his poor saints to receive the rents we owe unto him for his mercies. An ingenuous guest, though his friend will take nothing for his entertainment, yet, to show his thankfulness, will give something to his servants. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 3.—“*But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*”—My brethren, look upon saintship as the greatest excellency to love it. So did Christ. His eye was “upon the excellent ones in the earth ;” that is, upon the saints, who were excellent to him ; yea, also even when not saints, because God loved them. Isaiah xliii. 4. It is strange to hear how men by their speeches will undervalue a saint as such, if without some other outward excellency. For whilst they acknowledge a man a saint, yet in other respects, they will contemn him ; “He is a holy man,” they will say, “but he is weak,” etc. But is he a saint ? And can there be any such other imperfection or weakness found as shall lay him low in thy thoughts in comparison of other carnal men more excellent ? Hath not Christ loved him, bought him, redeemed him ?—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 3.—“*But to the saints.*” I understand that a man then evinces affection towards God, and towards those who love God, when his soul yearns after them—when he obliges himself to love them by practically serving and benefiting them—acting towards them as he would act towards God himself were he to see him in need of his service, as David says he did.—*Juan de Valdes, 1550.*

Verse 3.—“*The saints.*” The Papists could abide no saints but those which are in heaven ; which argueth that they live in a kingdom of darkness, and err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God ; for if they were but meanly conversant in the Scriptures, in the holy epistles, they should find almost in every epistle mention made of the saints who are thereunto called in Jesus Christ, through whom they are sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And mark, he calleth them “*excellent.*” Some think rich men to be excellent, some think learned men to be excellent, some count men in authority so to be, but here we are taught that those men are *excellent* who are sanctified by God’s graces.—*Richard Greenham.*

Verse 3.—By David’s language, there were many singular saints in his day : “*To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*” Was it so then, and should it not be so now ? We know the New Testament outshines the Old as much as the sun outshines the moon. If we then live in a more glorious dispensation, should we not maintain a more glorious conversation ? . . . . “*The excellent.*” Were the sun to give no more delight than a star, you could not believe he was the regent of the day ; were he to transmit no more heat than a glow-worm, you would question his being the source of elementary heat. Were God to do no more than a creature, where would his Godhead be ? Were a man to do no more than a brute, where would his manhood be ? Were not a saint to *excel* a sinner, where would his sanctity be ?—*William Secker.*

Verse 3.—Ingo, an ancient king of the Draves, who making a stately feast, appointed his nobles, at that time Pagans, to sit in the hall below, and commanded certain poor Christians to be brought up into his presence-chamber, to sit with him at his table, to eat and drink of his kingly cheer, at which many wondering, he said, he accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament to his table, and more worthy of his company than the greatest peers unconverted to the Christian faith ; for when these might be thrust down to hell, those might be his comforts and fellow princes in heaven. Although you see the stars sometimes by their reflections in a puddle, in the bottom of a well, or in a stinking ditch, yet the stars have their situation in heaven. So, although you see a godly man in a poor, miserable, low, despised condition, for the things of this world, yet he is fixed in heaven, in the region of heaven : “Who hath raised us up,” saith the apostle, “and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”—*Charles Bradbury’s “Cabinet of Jewels,” 1785.*

Verse 3.—To sum up all, we must know that we neither do nor can love the godly so well as we should do ; but all is well if we would love them better, and do like ourselves the less because we do love them no more, and that this is common or usual with me, then I am right : so that we are to love the godly first because God

commands it, because they are good ; and in these cases our faith doth work by our love to good men. Next, when I am at the worst, like a sick sheep, I care not for the company of other sheep, but do mope in a corner by myself ; but yet I do not delight in the society of goats or dogs, it proves that I have some good blood left in me ; it is because for the present I take little or no delight in myself or in my God, that I delight no better in the godly : yet as I love myself for all that, so I may be said to love them for all this. Man indeed is a sociable creature, a company-keeper by nature when he is himself ; and if we do not associate ourselves with the ungodly, though for the present, and care not much to show ourselves amongst the godly, the matter is not much, it is a sin of infirmity, not a fruit of iniquity. The disciples went from Christ, but they turned not to the other side as Judas did, who did forsake his Master and joined himself to his Master's enemies, but they got together. Some say Demas did repent (which I think to be the truth), and then he did "embrace this present world," but for the present fit : put case he did forsake Paul ; so did better men than he. Indeed as long as a man hath his delights about him, he will embrace the delights of this present world, or the delights which belong to the world to come ; join with Paul, or cleave to the world. In this temptation our stay is, first, that we care not for the company of goats ; next, that as we should, so we would, and desire that we may take delight in the company of sheep, to count them the only *excellent* men in the world, *in whom is all our delight*. The conclusion is, that to love the saints as saints, is a sound proof of faith ; the reason is, for that we cannot master our affections by love, but first we must master our understandings by faith.—*Richard Capel*, 1586—1656.

*Verse 4.*—"Drink offerings of blood." The Gentiles used to offer, and sometimes to drink part of the blood of their sacrifices, whether of beasts or of men, as either of them were sacrificed.—*Matthew Poole*.

*Verse 4.*—"Drink offerings of blood." It is uncertain whether this expression is to be understood literally to be blood, which the heathen actually mixed in their libations when they bound themselves to the commission of some dreadful deed, or whether their libations are figuratively called offerings of blood to denote the horror with which the writer regarded them.—*George R. Noyes*, *in loc*, 1846.

*Verse 4 (last clause).*—A sin rolled under the tongue becomes soft and supple, and the throat is so short and slippery a passage, that insensibly it may slide down from the mouth into the stomach ; and contemplative wantonness quickly turns into practical uncleanness.—*Thomas Fuller*.

*Verse 5.*—"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance." If the Lord be thy portion, then thou mayst conclude omnipotency is my portion, immensity, all-sufficiency, etc. Say not, If so, then I should be omnipotent, etc. There is a vast difference betwixt identity and interest, betwixt conveying of a title and transmutation of nature. A friend gives thee an invaluable treasure, and all the securities of it that thou canst desire ; wilt thou deny it is thine because thou art not changed into its nature ? The attributes are thine, as thy inheritance, as thy lands are thine ; not because thou art changed into their nature, but because the title is conveyed to thee, it is given thee, and improved for thy benefit. If another manage it, who can do it with greater advantage to thee than thou to thyself, it is no infringement of thy title . . . . The Lord is our *portion*, and this is incomparably more than if we had heaven and earth ; for all the earth is but as a point compared with the vastness of the heavens, and the heavens themselves are but a point compared with God. What a large possession have we then ! There is no confiscation of it, no banishment from it. Our portion fills heaven and earth, and is infinitely above heaven and below earth, and beyond both. Poor men boast and pride themselves of a kingdom, but we have more than all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof. Christ has given us more than the devil could offer him.—*David Clarkon*.

*Verse 5.*—"Portion of mine inheritance and of my cup," may contain an allusion to the daily supply of food, and also to the inheritance of Levi. Deut. xviii. 1, 2. "*Critical and Explanatory Pocket Bible.*" By A. R. Fausset and B. M. Smith, 1867.

*Verses 5, 6.*—"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance : the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places ; yea, I have a goodly heritage." "Blessed are the people that are in such a case ; yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord." No greater mercy can be bestowed upon any people, family, or person, than this, for God to dwell among them. If we value this mercy according to the excellency



and worth of that which is bestowed, it is the greatest; if we value it according to the good will of him that gives it, it will appear likewise to be the greatest favour. The greatness of the good will of God in giving himself to be our acquaintance, is evident in the nature of the gift. A man may give his estate to them to whom his love is not very large, but he never gives himself but upon strong affection. God gives abundantly to all the works of his hands; he causeth the sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and the rain to descend upon the just and the unjust; but it cannot be conceived that he should give himself to be a portion, a friend, father, husband, but in abundance of love. Whosoever therefore shall refuse acquaintance with God, slighteth the greatest favour that ever God did bestow upon man. Now, consider what a high charge this is; to abuse such a kindness from God is an act of the greatest vileness. David was never so provoked as when the king of Ammon abused his kindness, in his ambassadors, after his father's death. And God is highly provoked when his greatest mercies, bestowed in the greatest love, are rejected and cast away. What could God give more and better than himself? . . . . Ask David what he thinks of God; he was well acquainted with him, he dwelt in his house, and by his good will would never be out of his more immediate presence and company: enquire, I pray, what he found amiss in him. That you may know his mind the better, he hath left it upon record in more than one or two places, what a friend he hath had of God. "*The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.*" Why, what is that you boast of so much, O David? Have not others had kingdoms as well as you? No, that's not the thing; a crown is one of the least jewels in my cabinet: "*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup.*"—James Janeway.

Verses 5, 6.—Take notice not only of the mercies of God, but of God in the mercies. Mercies are never so savoury as when they savour of a Saviour.—Ralph Venning, 1620—1673.

Verse 6.—"*The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.*" Bitter herbs will go down very well, when a man has such delicious "meats which the world knows not." The sense of our Father's love is like honey at the end of every rod; it turns stones into bread, and water into wine, and the valley of trouble into a door of hope; it makes the biggest evils seem as if they were none, or better than none; for it makes our deserts like the garden of the Lord, and when we are upon the cross for Christ, as if we were in paradise with Christ. Who would quit his duty for the sake of suffering, that hath such relief under it? Who would not rather walk in truth, when he hath such a cordial to support him, than by the conduct of fleshly wisdom, to take any indirect or irregular method for his own deliverance?—Timothy Cruso.

Verse 6.—"*The lines.*" Probably alluding to the division of the land by lot, and the measuring of it off by ropes and lines. David believed in an overruling destiny which fixed the bounds of his abode, and his possessions; he did more, he was satisfied with all the appointment of the predestinating God.—C. H. S.

Verse 7.—"*I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel.*" The Holy Ghost is a spirit of counsel, powerfully instructing and convincingly teaching how to act and walk, for he directs us to set right steps, and to walk with a right foot, and thereby prevents us of many a sin, by reasonable instruction set on upon our hearts with a strong hand; as Isaiah viii. 11. For, as the same prophet says (Isaiah xi. 2), he is the spirit of counsel and of might. Of counsel to direct; of might, to strengthen the inner man. Such he was to Christ the Head, of whom it is there spoken. For instance, in that agony (on the determination of which our salvation depended), and conflict in the garden, when he prayed, "Let this cup pass," it was this good Spirit that counselled him to die; and he blesseth God for it. "I bless the Lord that hath given me counsel." It was that counsel that in that case caused his heart to say, "Not my will, but thine."—Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 7.—"*My reins.*" Common experience shows that the workings of the mind, particularly the passions of joy, grief, and fear, have a very remarkable effect on the reins or kidneys, and from their retired situation in the body, and their being hid in fat, they are often used in Scripture to denote the most secret working of the soul and affections.—John Parkhurst.

Verse 7.—"*My reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*" This shows that God, who, he says, was always present to him, had given him some admonition

in his dreams, or at least his waking thoughts by night, from whence he gathered a certain assurance of his recovery; possibly he might be directed to some remedy. Antonine thanks the gods for directing him in his sleep to remedies.—Z. Mudge, in *loc.*, 1744.

Verse 7.—“*My reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*” We have a saying among ourselves that “the pillow is the best counsellor;” and there is much truth in the saying, especially if we have first committed ourselves in prayer to God, and taken a prayerful spirit with us to our bed. In the quiet of its silent hours, undisturbed by the passions, and unharassed by the conflicts of the world, we can commune with our own heart, and be instructed and guarded as to our future course even “*in the night season.*” David especially seems to have made these seasons sources of great profit as well as delight. Sometimes he loved to meditate upon God as he lay upon his bed; and it was no doubt as he meditated on the Lord’s goodness and on the way by which he had led him, that he was, as it were, constrained, even at midnight, to arise and pray. While, therefore, we acknowledge the pillow to be a good counsellor, let us with David here acknowledge also that it is the Lord who gives the counsel, and sends the instruction in the night season.—Barton Bouchier.

Verse 3.—“*I have set the Lord always before me.*” David did not by fits and starts set the Lord before him; but he “*always*” set the Lord before him in his course; he had his eye upon the Lord, and so much the Hebrew word imports: I have equally set the Lord before me; that is the force of the original word, that is, I have set the Lord before me, at one time as well as another, without any irregular affections or passions, etc. In every place, in every condition, in every company, in every employment, and in every enjoyment, I have set the Lord equally before me; and this raised him, and this will raise any Christian, by degrees, to a very great height of holiness.—Thomas Brooks.

Verse 8.—“*I have set the Lord always before me.*” Hebrew, I have equally set, or proposed. The apostle translateth it, “I foresaw the Lord always before my face.” Acts ii. 25. I set the eye of my faith full upon him, and suffer it not to take to other things; I look him in the face, *oculo irretorto*, as the eagle looketh upon the sun; and *oculo adamantino*, with an eye of adamant, which turns only to one point: so here I have equally set the Lord before me, without irregular affections and passions. And this was one of those lessons that his reins had taught him, that the Holy Spirit had dictated unto him.—John Trapp.

Verse 8.—“*I have set the Lord ALWAYS before me.*” Like as the gnomon doth ever behold the north star, whether it be closed and shut up in a coffer of gold, silver, or wood, never losing its nature; so a faithful Christian man, whether he abound in wealth or be pinched with poverty, whether he be of high or low degree in this world, ought continually to have his faith and hope surely built and grounded upon Christ, and to have his heart and mind fast fixed and settled in him, and to follow him through thick and thin, through fire and water, through wars and peace, through hunger and cold, through friends and foes, through a thousand perils and dangers, through the surges and waves of envy, malice, hatred, evil speeches, railing sentences, contempt of the world, flesh, and devil, and even in death itself, be it never so bitter, cruel, and tyrannical, yet never to lose sight and view of Christ, never to give over faith, hope, and trust in him.—Robert Cawdray.

Verse 8.—“*I have set the Lord always before me.*” By often thinking of God, the heart will be enticed into desires after him. *Isalah xxvi. 8.* “The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee;” and see what follows, verse 9: “With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.” Love sets the soul on musing, and from musing to praying. Meditation is prayer in bullion, prayer in the ore—soon melted and run into holy desires. The laden cloud soon drops into rain; the piece charged soon goes off when fire is put to it. A meditating soul is in *proxima potentia* to prayer.—William Gurnall.

Verse 8.—“*I have set the Lord always before me,*” etc. He that by faith eyes God continually as his protector in trouble “*shall not be moved*” with any evil that he suffers, and he that eyes God by faith as his pattern in holiness, shall not be moved from doing that which is good. This thought—the Lord is at our right hand—keeps us from turning either to the right hand or to the left. It is said of Enoch, that “he walked with God” (*Genesis v. 22*), and though the history of his life be very short, yet ’tis said of him a second time (*verse 24*), that “he walked with God.”

He walked so much with God that he walked as God : he did not "walk" (which kind of walking the apostle reproveth, 1 Cor. iii. 3), "as men." He walked so little like the world that his stay was little in the world. "He was not," saith the text, "for God took him." He took him from the world to himself, or, as the author to the Hebrews reports it, "he was translated that he should not see death, for he had this testimony, that he pleased God."—*Joseph Caryl*.

*Verse 8.*—"Because he is at my right hand," etc. Of ourselves we stand not at any time, by his power we may overcome at all times. And when we are sorest assaulted he is ever ready at our right hand to support and stay us that we shall not fall. He hath well begun, and shall happily go forward in his work, who hath in truth begun. For true grace well planted in the heart, how weak, soever, shall hold out for ever. All total decays come from this—that the heart was never truly mollified, nor grace deeply and kindly rooted therein.—*John Ball*.

*Verse 8.*—"He is at my right hand." This phrase of speech is borrowed from those who, when they take upon them the patronage, defence, or tuition of any, will set them on their right hand, as in place of most safeguard. Experience confirmeth this in children, who in any imminent danger shroud and shelter themselves under their father's arms or hands, as under a sufficient buckler. Such was the estate of the man of God, as here appeareth, who was hemmed and edged in with the power of God, both against present evils, and dangers to come.—*Richard Greenham*

*Verse 8.*—Even as a column or pillar is sometimes on thy right hand, and sometimes on thy left hand, because thou dost change thy standing, sitting, or walking, for it is unmovable and keepeth one place ; so God is sometimes favourable and bountiful unto thee, and sometimes seemeth to be wroth and angry with thee, because thou dost fall from virtue to vice, from obedience and humility to pride and presumption ; for in the Lord there is no change, no, not so much as any shadow of change. He is immutable, always one and everlasting. If thou wilt bend thyself to obedience, and to a virtuous and godly life, thou shalt ever have him a strong rock, whereupon thou mayst boldly build a castle and tower of defence. He will be unto thee a mighty pillar, bearing up heaven and earth, whereto thou mayst lean and not be deceived, wherein thou mayst trust and not be disappointed. He will ever be at thy right hand, that thou shalt not fall. He will take thy part, and will mightily defend thee against all enemies of thy body and of thy soul ; but if thou wilt shake hands with virtue, and bid it adieu, and farewell, and, forsaking the ways of God, wilt live as thou list, and follow thy own corruption, and make no conscience of aught thou doest, defiling and blemishing thyself with all manner of sin and iniquity, then be sure the Lord will appear unto thee in his fury and indignation. From his justice and judgments none shall ever be able to deliver thee.—*Robert Cawdray*.

*Verse 9.*—"My heart is glad." Men may for a time be hearers of the gospel, men may for order's sake pray, sing, receive the sacraments ; but if it be without joy, will not that hypocrisy in time break out ? Will they not begin to be weary ? Nay will they not be as ready to hear any other doctrine ? Good things cannot long find entertainment in our corruptions, unless the Holy Ghost hath changed us from our old delights to conceive pleasure in these things.—*Richard Greenham*.

*Verse 9.*—"My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth." His inward joy was not able to contain itself. We testify our pleasure on lower occasions, even at the gratification of our senses ; when our ear is filled with harmonious melody, when our eye is fixed upon admirable and beauteous objects, when our smell is recreated with agreeable odours, and our taste also by the delicacy and rareness of provisions ; and much more will our soul show its delight, when its faculties, that are of a more exquisite constitution, meet with things that are in all respects agreeable and pleasant to them ; and in God they meet with all those : with his light our understanding is refreshed, and so is our will with his goodness and his love.—*Timothy Rogers*.

*Verse 9.*—"Therefore my heart is glad," etc. That is, I am all over in very good plight, as well as heart can wish, or require ; I do over-abound exceedingly with joy ; "God forgive me mine unthankfulness and unworthiness of so great glory" (as that martyr said) : "In all the days of my life I was never so merry as now I am in this dark dungeon," etc. Wicked men rejoice in appearance, and not in heart (2 Cor. v. 12) ; their joy is but skin deep, their mirth frothy and flashy, such as wetteth the mouth, but warmeth not the heart. But David is *totus totus, quantus quantus exultabundus* ; his heart, glory, flesh, (answerable, as some



think to that of the apostle, 1 Thess. v. 23; *spirit, soul, and body*) were all overjoyed.—*John Trapp.*

*Verse 9.*—"My flesh shall rest in hope." If a Jew pawned his bed-clothes, God provided mercifully that it should be restored before night: "For," saith he, "that is his covering: wherein shall he sleep?" Exodus xxii. 27. Truly, hope is the saint's covering, wherein he wraps himself, when he lays his body down to sleep in the grave: "My flesh," saith David, "shall rest in hope." O Christian, bestir thyself to redeem thy hope before this sun of thy temporal life goes down upon thee, or else thou art sure to lie down in sorrow. A sad going to the bed of the grave he hath who hath no hope of a resurrection to life.—*William Gurnall.*

*Verse 9.*—"My flesh shall rest in hope." That hope which is grounded on the word, gives rest to the soul; 'tis an anchor to keep it steady. Heb. vi. 13. Which shows the unmovableness of that which our anchor is fastened to. The promise sustains our faith, and our faith is that which supports us. He that hopes in the Word as David did (Psalm cxix. 81), lays a mighty stress upon it; as Samson did when he leaned upon the pillars of the house, so as to pull it down upon the Philistines. A believer throws the whole weight of all his affairs and concerns, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, upon the promises of God, like a man resolved to stand or fall with them. He ventures himself, and all that belongs to him, entirely upon this bottom, which is in effect to say, if they will not bear me up, I am content to sink; I know that there shall be a performance of those things which have been told me from the Lord, and therefore I will incessantly look for it.—*Timothy Cruso.*

*Verse 10.*—"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," etc. The title of this golden text may be—*The embalming of the dead saints*: the force whereof is to free the souls from dereliction in the state of death, and to secure the bodies of God's saints from corruption in the grave. It is the art which I desire to learn, and at this time, teach upon this sad occasion,\* even the preparing of this confection against our burials.—*George Hughes, 1642.*

*Verse 10.*—Many of the elder Reformers held that our Lord in soul actually descended into hell, according to some of them to suffer there as our surety, and according to others to make a public triumph over death and hell. This idea was almost universally, and, as we believe, most properly repudiated by the Puritans. To prove this fact, it may be well to quote from Corbet's witty itinerary of,

"Four clerkes of Oxford, doctors two, and two  
That would be doctors."

He laments the secularisation of church appurtenances at Banbury, by the Puritans whom he describes as,

"They which tell  
That Christ hath nere descended into hell,  
But to the grave."

*C. H. S. The quotation is from Richard Corbet's Poems, 1632.*

*Verse 10.*—"My soul in hell." Christ in soul descended into hell, when as our surety he submitted himself to bear those hellish sorrows (or equivalent to them), which we were bound by our sins to suffer for ever. His descension is his projection of himself into the sea of God's wrath conceived for our sins, and his ingress into most unspeakable straits and torments in his soul, which we should else have suffered for ever in hell. This way of Christ's descending into hell is expressly uttered in the person of David, as the type of Christ. Psalm lxxxvi. 13; cxvi. 3; lxix. 1-3. Thus the prophet Isaiah saith, "His soul was made an offering." Isaiah liii. 10. And this I take it David means, when he said of Christ, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." Psalm xvi; Acts ii. And thus Christ descended into hell when he was alive, not when he was dead. Thus his soul was in hell when in the garden he did sweat blood, and on the cross when he cried so lamentably, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvi. 38.—*Nicholas Byfield's "Exposition of the Creed," 1676.*

*Verse 10.*—"In hell." *Sheol* here, as *hades* in the New Testament, signifies the state of the dead, the separate state of souls after death, the invisible world of souls, where Christ's soul was, though it did not remain there, but on the third day returned

\* A Funeral Sermon.

to its body again. It seems best of all to interpret this word of the grave as it is rendered; Gen. xlii. 38; Isaiah xxxviii. 18.—*John Gill.*

Verse 10.—“*Thine Holy One.*” *Holiness* preserves the soul from dereliction, in the state of death, and the body of the saint from corruption in the grave. If it be desired by any that doubt of it, to see the clear issue of this from the text, I shall guide them to read this text with a great accent upon that term, “*Thine Holy One,*” that they may take special notice of it, even the quality of that man exempted from these evils. In this the Spirit of God puts an emphasis upon *holiness*, as counter-working and prevailing over death and the grave. It is this and nothing but this, that thus keeps the man, dead and buried, from desertion in death, and corruption in the grave.—*George Hughes.*

Verse 10.—The great promise to Christ is, that though he took a corruptible body upon him, yet he should “*not see corruption,*” that is, *partake of corruption*, corruption should have no communion with, much less power over him.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10.—Quoted by the apostle Peter (Acts ii. 27); on which Hackett (*Com. in loc.*) observes:—“The sense then may be expressed thus: Thou wilt not give me up as a prey to death; he shall not have power over me, to dissolve the body and cause it to return to dust.”

Verse 11.—In this verse are four things observable:—1. *A Guide*, THOU. 2. *A Traveller*, ME. 3. *A Way*, THE PATH. 4. *The End*, LIFE, described after. For that which follows is but the description of this life.

This verse is a proper subject for a *meditation*. For, all three are solitary. *The guide* is but one; the *traveller*, one; the *way*, one; and the *life*, the only one. To meditate well on this is to bring all together; and at last make them all but *one*. Which that we may do, let us first seek our *Guide*.

*The Guide.* Him we find named in the first verse—Jehovah. Here we may begin, as we ought in all holy exercises, with *adoration*. For, “unto him all knees shall bow;” nay, unto his *name*. For holy is his name. Glory be to thee, O God! He is *Deus*, therefore *holy*; he is *Deus fortis*, therefore *able*. “For the strength of the hills is his;” and if there be a *way* on earth, he can “*show*” it; for in his hands are all the corners of the earth. But is he *willing* to “*show*”? Yes, though he be *Deus, holy* (which is a word terrible to poor flesh and blood), yet he is *Deus meus*, my holiness. That takes away servile fear. He is *meus*, we have a property in him; and he is willing: “*Thou wilt show,*” etc. And that you may know *he will guide*, David shows a little above how diligently he will guide. First, he will *go before*, he will lead the way himself: if I can but follow, I shall be sure to go right. And he that hath a *guide* before him, and will not follow, is worthy to be left behind. But say, I am willing, I do desire to go, and I do follow: what if, through faintness in the long way, I fall often? or, for want of care step out of the way, shall I not then be left behind? Fear not; for “He is at my right hand, so that I shall not slip.” Verse 8. This is some comfort indeed. But we are so soon weary in this way, and do fall and err so often, that it would weary the patience of a good *guide* to lead us but one day. Will he bear with us, and continue to the end? Yes, always; or this text deceives us; for all this is found in the eighth verse. We must have *him* or none; for he is one, and the only one. So confessed Asaph: “Whom have I on earth but thee?” Seek this *good Guide*, he is easy to be found: “Seek, and ye shall find.” You shall find that he is first *holy*; secondly, *able*; thirdly, *willing*; fourthly, *diligent*; and fifthly, *constant*. O my soul! to follow him, and he will make thee both *able* to follow to the end; and *holy* in the end.

*The traveller.* Having found the *Guide*, we shall not long seek for one that wants him; for, see, here is a *man out of his way*. And that will soon appear if we consider his condition. For, he is a *stranger* (“*Thou wilt show me*”); and what am I? “I am a stranger, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were,” says he, in another place. But this was in the old time under the law; what, are we, their sons, in the gospel, any other? Peter tells us no: that we are strangers and pilgrims too; that is, travellers. We travel, as being *out of our country*; and we are strangers to those we converse with. For neither the natives be our friends, nor anything we possess truly our own. It is time we had *animum revertendi*; and surely so we have if we could but pray on the way. *Converte nos Domine*. But it is so long since we came hither, we have forgot the way home: *obliti sunt montis mei*. Yet still we are travelling; and, we think, homewards. For all hope well: *oculi omnium sperant*

*in te.* But *right*, like pilgrims, or rather, wanderers. For we scarce know if we go right; and, which is worse, have little care to enquire.

"*Me.*" David still keeps the singular number. As there is but *one* guide, so he speaks in the person but of *one traveller*. There is somewhat, peradventure, in that. It is to show his *confidence*. The Lord's prayer is in the plural, but the creed in the singular. We may pray that God would guide *all*; but we can be confident for none but ourselves. "*Thou wilt show,*" or thou dost, or hast, as some translate: all is but to show particular confidence. "*Thou wilt show me;*" *me*, not *us*, a number indefinite wherein I *may* be one; but *thou* in particular that am out of the way; that am myself *alone*; that must walk in "*the path*" *alone*. Either I must follow, or go before others; I must work for myself alone; believe for myself alone; and be saved by one alone. *The way* in this text that I must walk is but one; nay, it is but a "*path*" where but one can go: this is no highway, but a *way* of sufferance by favour: it is none of ours. It is no *road*; you cannot hurry here, or gallop by troops: it is but *semita*, a small *footpath* for one to go alone in. Nay, as it is a *way* for *one alone*, so it is a *lonely way*: *prepare vias ejus in solitudine*, saith John, and he knew which way God went, who is our *Guide in solitudine*: there is the sweetness of solitariness, the comforts of meditation. For God is never more familiar with man than when man is *in solitudine, alone*, in his *path* by himself. Christ himself came thus, all *lonely*; without troop, or noise, and ever avoided the tumultuous multitude, though they would have made him a king. And he never spake to them but in parables; but to *his* that sought him, in *solitudine*, in private, he spake plain; and so doth he still love to do to the soul, in private and particular. Therefore well said David, "*Thou wilt show me,*" in particular, and in the singular number. But how shall I know that I, in particular, shall be taught and *showed this way*? This prophet, that had experience, will tell us: *miles docebit, the humble he will teach*. Psalm xxv. 9. If thou canst humble thyself, thou mayst be sure to see thy *guide*; Christ hath crowned this virtue with a blessing: "*Blessed are the meek;*" for them he will call to him and teach. But thou must be humble then. For heaven is built like our churches, high-roofed within, but with a strait low gate; they then that enter there must stoop, ere they can see God. Humility is the mark at every cross, whereby thou shalt know if thou be in the way: if any be otherwise minded, God also shall reveal it unto you, for, "*Thou wilt show.*"

"*The path.*" But let us now see *what* he will *show* us: "*the path.*" We must know, that as men have *many paths* out of their highway—the world—but they all end in destruction; so God hath *many paths* out of his highway, the word, but they all end in salvation. Let us oppose ours to his (as indeed they are opposite), and see how they agree. *Ours* are not worth *marking*, *his* marked with an *attentid*, to begin withal; *ours* bloody, *his* unpolluted; *ours* crooked, *his* straight; *ours* lead to hell, *his* to heaven. Have not we strayed then? We had need to turn and take another path, and that quickly: we may well say, *semitas nostras, à viâ tuâ*. Well, here is *the Book*, and here are the *ways* before you; and he will *show* you. Here is *semita mandatorum*, in the one hundred-and-nineteenth Psalm, verse thirty-five; here is *semita pacifica* (Prov. iii. 17); here is *semita æquitatis* (Prov. iv. 11); here is *semita justitiæ* (Psalm xxiii. 3); here is *semita judicii* (Prov. xvii. 23); and many others. These are, every one of them, *God's ways*; but these are somewhat too many and too far off: we must seek the *way* where all these meet, and that will bring us into "*the path*;" these are many, but I will show you yet "*a more excellent way,*" saith Paul. 1 Cor. xii. 31.

We must begin to enter at *via mandatorum*; for till then we are in the dark and can distinguish no *ways*, whether they be good or bad. But there we shall meet with a *lantern* and a *light* in it. Thy commandment is a lantern, and the law a light. Prov. vi. 23. Carry this with thee (as a good man should, *lex Dei in corde ejus*); and it will bring thee into the *way*. And see how careful our *Guide* is; for lest the wind should blow out this light, he hath put it into a lantern to preserve it. For the fear, or sanction, of the "*commandments,*" preserves the memory of the law in our hearts, as a lantern doth a light burning within it. The law is the light, and the commandment the lantern. So that neither flattering Zephyrus, nor blustering Boreas shall be able to blow it out, so long as the fear of the sanction keeps it in. This is *lucerna pedibus* (Psalm cxix. 105); and will not only *show* thee where thou shalt tread, but what pace thou shalt keep. When thou hast this light, take *Jeremy's counsel*; enquire for *semita antiqua*, before thou goest any further. "*Stand* (saith



he) in the ways and behold and ask for the old way ; which is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." This will bring you some whither where you may rest awhile. And whither is that ? Trace this *path*, and you shall find this " old way " to run quite through all the Old Testament till it end in the New, the gospel of peace, and there is rest. And that this is so Paul affirms. For the law, which is the " old way," is but the pedagogue to the gospel. This then is " a more excellent way " than the law, the ceremonies whereof in respect of this were called " beggarly rudiments." When we come there, we shall find the way pleasant and very *light*, so that we shall plainly see before us that *very path*, that *only path*, " the path of life " (*semita vitæ*), in which the gospel ends, as the law ends in the gospel. Now what is *semita vitæ* that we seek for ? " All the ways of God are truth," saith David. Psalm cxix. 151. He doth not say they are *veræ*, or *veritates*, but *veritas* ; all one truth. So, all the *ways* of God end in one truth. *Semita vitæ*, then, is *truth*. And so sure a *way* to life is *truth*, that John says, he had " no greater joy " than to hear that his sons " walked in truth." 3 John i. 3. " No greater joy : " for it brings them certainly to a joy, than which there is none greater. *Via veritatis* is " the gospel of truth," but *semita vitæ* is the truth itself. Of these, Esay prophesied, *et erit ibi semita et via*, etc. " There shall be a path, and a way ; " and the way shall be called *holy*, the proper epithet of the gospel : " *the holy gospel*," that is the *way*. But the *path* is the epitome of this *way* (called in our text, by way of excellence, " *the path*," in the singular) ; than which there is no other. " The gospel of your salvation," saith Paul, is " the word of truth ; " and " thy word is truth," saith our Saviour to his Father. *Truth*, then, is " *the path of life*," for it is the epitome of the gospel, which is the *way*. This is that truth which Pilate (unhappy man) asked after, but never stayed to be resolved of. He himself is the word ; the word is the truth ; and the truth is " *the path of life*," trodden by all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs and confessors, that ever went to heaven before us. The abstract of the gospel, the gate of heaven, *semita vitæ*, " *the path of life*," even Jesus Christ the righteous, who hath beaten the way for us, gone himself before us, and left us the prints of his footsteps for us to follow, where he himself sits ready to receive us. So, the law is the light, the gospel is the way, and Christ is " *the path of life*."—William Austin, 1637.

Verse 11.—It is Christ's triumphing in the consideration of his exaltation, and taking pleasure in the fruits of his sufferings : " *Thou wilt show me the paths of life*." God hath now opened the way to paradise, which was stopped up by a flaming sword, and made the path plain by admitting into heaven the head of the believing world. This is part of the joy of the soul of Christ ; he hath now a fulness of joy, a satisfying delight instead of an overwhelming sorrow ; a " fulness of joy," not only some sparks and drops as he had now and then in his debased condition ; and that in the presence of his Father. His soul is fed and nourished with a perpetual vision of God, in whose face he beholds no more frowns, no more designs of treating him as a servant, but such smiles that shall give a perpetual succession of joy to him, and fill his soul with fresh and pure flames. Pleasures they are, pleasantness in comparison whereof the greatest joys in this life are anguish and horrors. His soul hath joys without mixture, pleasures without number, a fulness without want, a constancy without interruption, and a perpetuity without end.—Stephen Charnock.

Verse 11.—" *In thy presence*," etc. To the blessed soul resting in Abraham's bosom, there shall be given an immortal, impassible, resplendent, perfect, and glorious body. Oh, what a happy meeting will this be, what a sweet greeting between the soul and body, the nearest and dearest acquaintance that ever were ! What a welcome will that soul give to her beloved body ! Blessed be thou (will she say), for thou hast aided me to the glory I have enjoyed since I parted with thee ; blessed art thou that sufferest thyself to be mortified, giving " thy members as weapons of righteousness unto God." Rom. vi. 13. Cheer up thyself, for now the time of labour is past, and the time of rest is come. Thou wast sown and buried in the dust of earth with ignominy, but now raised in glory ; sown in weakness, but raised in power ; sown a natural body, but raised a spiritual body ; sown in corruption, but raised in incorruption. 1 Cor. xv. 43. O my dear companion and familiar, we took sweet counsel together, we two have walked together as friends in God's house (Psalm lv. 14), for when I prayed inwardly, thou didst attend my devotions with bowed knees and lifted-up hands outwardly. We two have been fellow labourers in the works of the Lord, we two have suffered together, and now we two shall ever reign together ; I will enter again into thee, and so both of us together will

enter into our Master's joy, where we shall have *pleasures at his right hand for evermore*.

The saints, entered as it were into the chamber of God's presence, shall have joy to their ears in hearing their own commendating and praise, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. xxv. 21); and in hearing the divine language of heavenly Canaan; for our bodies shall be *vera et viva*, perfect like Christ's glorious body, who did both hear other and speak himself after his resurrection, as it is apparent in the gospels' history. Now, then, if the words of the wise spoken in due places be like "apples of gold with pictures of silver" (Prov. xxv. 11), if the mellifluous speech of Origen, the silver trumpet of Hillary, the golden mouth of Chrysostom, bewitched as it were their auditory with exceeding great delight; if the gracious eloquence of heathen orators, whose tongues were never touched with a coal from God's altar, could steal away the hearts of their hearers, and carry them up and down whither they would, what a "*fulness of joy*" will it be to hear not only the sanctified, but also the glorified tongues of saints and angels in the kingdom of glory? . . . . . Bonaventure fondly reports at all adventure, that St. Francis hearing an angel a little while playing on a harp, was so moved with extraordinary delight, that he thought himself in another world. Oh! what a "*fulness of joy*" will it be to hear more than twelve legions of angels, accompanied with a number of happy saints which no man is able to number, all at once sing together, "Hallelujah, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." "And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Rev. iv. 8; v. 13. If the voices of mortal men, and the sound of cornet, trumpet, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and other well-tuned instruments of music, passing through our dull ears in this world be so powerful, that all our affections are diversely transported according to the divers kinds of harmony, then how shall we be ravished in God's presence when we shall hear heavenly airs with heavenly ears!

Concerning "*fulness of joy*" to the rest of the senses I find a very little or nothing in holy Scriptures, and therefore seeing God's Spirit will not have a pen to write, I may not have a tongue to speak. Divines in general affirm, that the smelling, and taste, and feeling, shall have joy proportionable to their blessed estate, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality; the body which is sown in weakness is to be raised in power; it is sown a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body, buried in dishonour, raised in glory; that is, capable of good, and, as being impassible, no way subject to suffer evil, insomuch that it cannot be hurt if it should be cast into hell fire, no more than Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, were hurt in the burning oven. In one word, God is not only to the souls, but also to the bodies of the saints, *all in all things*; a glass to their sight, honey to their taste, music to their hearing, balm to their smelling.—*John Boys*.

Verse 11.—"*In thy presence is fulness of joy.*" The saints on earth are all but *viatores*, wayfaring men, wandering pilgrims far from home; but the saints in heaven are *comprehensores*, safely arrived at the end of their journey. All we here present for the present, are but mere strangers in the midst of danger, we are losing ourselves and losing our lives in the land of the dying. But ere long, we may find our lives and ourselves again in heaven with the Lord of life, being found of him in the land of the living. If when we die, we be in the Lord of life, our souls are sure to be bound up in the bundle of life, that so when we live again we may be sure to find them in the life of the Lord. Now we have but a dram, but a scruple, but a grain of happiness, to an ounce, to a pound, to a thousand weight of heaviness; now we have but a drop of joy to an ocean of sorrow; but a moment of ease to an age of pain; but then (as St. Austin very sweetly in his *Soliloquies*), we shall have endless ease without any pain, true happiness without any heaviness, the greatest measure of felicity without the least of misery, the fullest measure of joy that may be, without any mixture of grief. Here therefore (as St. Gregory the divine adviseth us), let us ease our heaviest loads of sufferings, and sweeten our bitterest cups of sorrows with the continual meditation and constant expectation of the *fulness of joy in the presence of God, and of the pleasure at his right hand for evermore*.

"*In thy presence, is,*" etc., *there it is*, not there it was, nor there it may be, nor there it will be, but *there it is*, there it *is* without cessation or intercision, there it always hath been, and is, and must be. It is an assertion *æternæ veritatis*, that is

always true, it may at any time be said that there it is. "In thy presence is the fulness of joy;" and herein consists the consummation of felicity; for what does any man here present wish for more than joy? And what measure of joy can any man wish for more than fulness of joy? And what kind of fulness would any man wish for rather than this fulness, the fulness *κατ' ἐξοχήν*? And where would any man wish to enjoy this fulness of joy rather than in the presence of God, which is the ever-flowing and the over-flowing fountain of joy? And when would any man wish for this enjoyment of the fulness of joy in the very fountain of joy rather than presently, constantly, and incessantly? Now all these desirables are encircled within the compass of the first remarkable, to make up the consummation of true felicity. "In thy presence is fulness of joy."—*The Consummation of Felicity*," by Edward Willan, 1645.

*Verse 11.*—The human nature of Christ in heaven hath a double capacity of glory, happiness and delight; one on that mere fellowship and communion with his Father and the other persons, through his personal union with the Godhead. Which joy of his in this fellowship, Christ himself speaks of as to be enjoyed by him: "In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." And this is a constant and settled fulness of pleasure, such as admits not any addition or diminution, but is always one and the same, and absolute and entire in itself; and of itself alone sufficient for the Son of God, and heir of all things to live upon, though he should have had no other comings in of joy and delight from any creature. And this is his natural inheritance.—*Thomas Goodwin*.

*Verse 11.*—"In thy presence is fulness of joy." In heaven they are free from want; they can want nothing there unless it be want itself. They may find the want of evil, but never find the evil of want. Evil is but the want of good, and the want of evil is but the absence of want. God is good, and no want of good can be in God. What want then can be endured in the presence of God, where no evil is, but all good that the fulness of joy may be enjoyed? Here some men eat their meat without any hunger, whilst others hunger without any meat to eat, and some men drink extremely without any thirst, whilst others thirst extremely without any drink. But in the glorious presence of God, not any one can be pampered with too much, nor any one be pined with too little. They that gather much of the heavenly manna, "have nothing over;" and "they that gather little have no lack." They that are once possessed of that presence of God, are so possessed with it that they can never feel the misery of thirst or hunger.—*Edward Willan*.

*Verse 11.*—"Fulness." Every soul shall there enjoy an infinite happiness, because it shall enjoy infinite goodness. And it shall be for ever enjoyed, without disliking of it, or losing of it, or lacking any of it. Every soul shall enjoy as much good in that presence, by the presence of that good, as it shall be able to receive, or to desire to receive. As much as shall make it fully happy. Every one shall be filled so proportionately full; and every desire in any soul shall be fulfilled so perfectly in that presence of glory, with the glory of that presence, that no one shall ever wish for any more, or ever be weary of that it has, or be willing to change it for any other.—*Edward Willan*.

*Verse 11.*—"Fulness of joy." When a man comes to the sea, he doth not complain that he wants his cistern of water: though thou didst suck comfort from thy relations; yet when thou comest to the ocean, and art with Christ, thou shalt never complain that thou hast left thy cistern behind. There will be nothing to breed sorrow in heaven; there shall be joy, and nothing but joy, heaven is set out by that phrase, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Here joy enters into us, there we enter into joy; the joys we have here are from heaven; the joys that we shall have with Christ are without measure and without mixture. "In thy presence is fulness of joy."—*Thomas Watson*.

*Verse 11.*—"In thy presence is fulness of joy." In this life our joy is mixed with sorrow like a prick under the rose. Jacob had joy when his sons returned home from Egypt with the sacks full of corn, but much sorrow when he perceived the silver in the sack's mouth. David had much joy in bringing up the ark of God, but at the same time great sorrow for the breach made upon Uzza. This is the Lord's great wisdom to temper and moderate our joy. As men of a weak constitution must have their wine qualified with water for fear of distemper, so must we in this life (such is our weakness), have our joy mixed with sorrow, lest we turn giddy and insolent. Here our joy is mixed with fear (Psalm ii.), "Rejoice with trembling;" the women departed from the sepulchre of our Lord "with fear and



great joy." Matthew xxviii. 8. In our regenerate estate, though we have joy from Christ that is "formed in us," yet the impression of the terrors of God before the time of our new birth remains in us; as in a commotion of the sea by a great tempest after a stormy wind hath ceased, yet the impression of the storm remains and makes an agitation. The tender mother recovering her young child from danger of a fall hath joy from the recovery; but with much fear with the impression of the danger: so after we are recovered here from our dangerous falls by the rich and tender mercies of our God, sometime preventing us, sometime restoring us, though we rejoice in his mercy, and in our own recovery out of the snares of Satan, yet in the midst of our joy the remembrance of former guiltiness and danger do humble our hearts with much sorrow, and some trepidation of heart. As our joy here is mixed with fears, so with sorrow also. Sound believers do look up to Christ crucified, and do rejoice in his incomparable love, that such a person should have died such a death for such as were enemies to God by sinful inclinations and wicked works; they look down also upon their own sins that have wounded and crucified the Lord of glory, and this breaketh the heart, as a widow should mourn, who by her froward and lewd behaviour hath burst the heart of a kind and loving husband.

The sound believers look to their small beginnings of grace, and they rejoice in the work of God's hands; but when they compare it with that original and primitive righteousness, they mourn bitterly, as the elders of Israel did at the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra iii. 12); "They who had seen the first house wept." But in heaven our joy will be full, without mixture of sorrow (John xvi. 20); "Your sorrow," saith our Lord, "shall be turned into joy." Then will there be no sorrow for a present trouble, nor present fear of future troubles. Then their eye will deeply affect their heart: the sight and knowledge of God the supreme and infinite good will ravish, and take up all their heart with joy and delight. Peter in the Mount (Matthew xvii.), was so affected with that glorious sight, that he forgot both the delights and troubles that were below; "It is good to be here," said he. How much more will all worldly troubles and delights be forgot at that soul-satisfying sight in heaven, which is as far above that of Peter in the Mount, as the third heaven is above that Mount, and as the uncreated is above the created glory!—*William Colvill's "Refreshing Streams,"* 1655.

Verse 11.—"*In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*" Mark, for quality, there are *pleasures*; for quantity, *fulness*; for dignity, *at God's right hand*; for eternity, *for evermore*. And millions of years multiplied by millions, make not up one minute to this eternity of joy that the saints shall have in heaven. In heaven there shall be no sin to take away your joy, nor no devil to take away your joy; nor no man to take away your joy. "Your joy no man taketh from you." John xvi. 22. The joy of the saints in heaven is never ebbing, but always flowing to all contentment. The joys of heaven never fade, never wither, never die, nor never are lessened nor interrupted. The joy of the saints in heaven is a constant joy, an everlasting joy, in the root and in the cause, and in the matter of it and in the objects of it. "Their joy lasts for ever whose objects remain for ever"—*Thomas Brooks*.

Verse 11.—"*Pleasures for evermore.*" The soul that is once landed at the heavenly shore is past all storms. The glorified soul shall be for ever bathing itself in the *rivers of pleasure*. This is that which makes heaven to be heaven, "We shall be ever with the Lord." 1 Thess. iv. 17. Austin saith, "Lord, I am content to suffer any pains and torments in this world, if I might see thy face one day; but alas! were it only a day, then to be ejected heaven, it would rather be an aggravation of misery;" but this word, "*ever with the Lord*," is very accumulative, and makes up the garland of glory: a state of eternity is a state of security.—*Thomas Watson*.

Verse 11.—This then may serve for a ground of comfort to every soul distressed with the tedious bitterness of this life; for short sorrow here, we shall have eternal joy; for a little hunger, an eternal banquet; for light sickness and affliction, everlasting health and salvation; for a little imprisonment, endless liberty; for disgrace, glory. Instead of the wicked who oppress and afflict them, they shall have the angels and saints to comfort and solace them, instead of Satan to torment and tempt them, they shall have Jesus to ravish and affect them. Joseph's prison shall be turned into a palace; Daniel's lions' den into the presence of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; the three children's hot fiery furnace, into the New Jerusalem of pure gold; David's Gath, into the tabernacle of the living God.—*John Cragge's "Cabinet of Spirituall Jewells,"* 1657.

*Verse 11.*—This heavenly feast will not have an end, as Ahasuerus's feast had, though it lasted many days; but "At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." *William Colvill.*

---

### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

*Michtam of David.*—Under the title of "The Golden Psalm," Mr. Canon Dale has published a small volume, which is valuable as a series of good simple discourses, but ought hardly to have been styled "an exposition." We have thought it right to give the headings of the chapters into which his volume is divided, for there is much showiness, and may be some solidity in the suggestions.

*Verse 1.*—*The seeking of the gold.* The believer conscious of danger, trusting in God only for deliverance.

*Verses 2, 3.*—*The possessing of the gold.* The believer looking for justification to the righteousness of God alone, while maintaining personal holiness by companionship with the saints.

*Verses 4, 5.*—*The testing of the gold.* The believer finding his present portion, and expecting his eternal inheritance in the Lord.

*Verse 6.*—*The prizing or valuing of the gold.* The believer congratulating himself on the pleasantness of his dwelling and the goodness of his heritage.

*Verses 7, 8.*—*The occupying of the gold.* The believer seeking instruction from the counsels of the Lord by night, and realising his promise by day.

*Verses 9, 10.*—*The summing or reckoning of the gold.* The believer rejoicing and praising God for the promise of a rest in hope and resurrection into glory.

*Verse 11.*—*The perfecting of the gold.* The believer realising at God's right hand the fulness of joy and the pleasures for evermore.

Upon this suggestive Psalm we offer the following few hints out of many—

*Verse 1.*—The prayer and the plea. The preserver and the truster. The dangers of the saints and the place of their confidence.

*Verse 2.*—"Thou art my Lord." The soul's appropriation, allegiance, assurance and avowal.

*Verses 2, 3.*—The influence and sphere of goodness. No profit to God, or departed saints or sinners, but to *living men.* Need of promptness, etc.

*Verses 2, 3.*—Evidence of true faith. I. Allegiance to divine authority. II. Rejection of self-righteousness. III. Doing good to the saints. IV. Appreciation of saintly excellence. V. delight in their society.

*Verse 3.*—*Excellent of the earth.* May be translated noble, wonderful, magnificent. They are so in their new birth, nature, clothing, attendance, heritage, etc., etc.

*Verse 3.*—"In whom is all my delight." Why Christians should be objects of our delight. Why we do not delight in them more. Why they do not delight in us. How to make our fellowship more delightful.

*Verse 3.*—Collection sermon for poor believers. I. Saints. II. Saints on the earth. III. These are excellent. IV. We must delight in them. V. We must extend our goodness to them.—*Matthew Henry.*

*Verse 4.*—Sorrows of idolatry illustrated in heathens and ourselves.

*Second clause.*—The duty of complete separation from sinners in life and lip.

*Verse 5.*—Future inheritance and present cup found in God. (See Exposition).

*Last clause.*—What our "lot" is. What danger it is in. Who defends it.

*Verse 6.*—"Pleasant places." Bethlehem, Calvary, Olivet, Tabor, Zion, Paradise, etc. II. *Pleasant purposes*, which made these lines fall to me. III. *Pleasant praises.* By service, sacrifice, and song.

*Verse 6 (second clause).*—I. A heritage. II. A goodly heritage. III. I have it. IV. Yea, or the Spirit's witness.

*Verse 6.*—"A goodly heritage." That which makes our portion good is—I. The favour of God with it. II. That it is from a Father's hand. III. That it comes through the covenant of grace. IV. That it is the purchase of Christ's blood. V. That it is an answer to prayer, and a blessing from above upon honest endeavours.

Verse 6.—We may put this acknowledgment into the mouth of—I. *An indulged child of providence.* II. *An inhabitant of this favoured country.* III. *A Christian with regard to his spiritual condition.*—William Jay.

Verse 7.—*Taking counsel's opinion.* Of whom? Upon what? Why? When? How? What then?

Verse 7.—Upward and inward, or two schools of instruction.

Verse 8.—Set the Lord always before you as—I. *Your protector.* II. *Your leader.* III. *Your example.* IV. *Your observer.*—William Jay.

Verses 8, 9.—A sense of the divine presence our best support. It yields. I. Good confidence concerning things without. "*I shall not be moved.*" II. Good cheer within. "*My heart is glad.*" III. Good music for the living tongue. "*My glory rejoiceth.*" IV. Good hope for the dying body. "*My flesh also,*" etc.

Verse 9 (*last clause*).—I. The saint's Sabbath (*rest*). II. His sarcophagus (*in hope*). III. His salvation (for which he *hopes*).

Verses 9, 10.—Jesus cheered in prospect of death by the safety of his soul and body; our consolation in him as to the same.

Verse 10.—Jesus dead, the place of his soul and his body. A difficult but interesting topic.

Verses 10, 11.—Because he lives we shall live also. The believer, therefore, can also say, "Thou wilt show *me* the path of life." This life means the blessedness reserved in heaven for the people of God after the resurrection. It has three characters. The first regards its *source*—it flows from "*his presence.*" The second regards its plenitude—it is "*fulness*" of joy. The third regards its *permanency*—the pleasures are "*for evermore.*"—William Jay.

Verse 11.—A sweet picture of heaven. (See Exposition.)

---