

PSALM XVII.

TITLE AND SUBJECT.—A Prayer of David. *David would not have been a man after God's own heart, if he had not been a man of prayer. He was a master in the sacred art of supplication. He flies to prayer in all times of need, as a pilot speeds to the harbour in the stress of tempest. So frequent were David's prayers that they could not all be dated and entitled; and hence this simply bears the author's name, and nothing more. The smell of the furnace is upon the present Psalm, but there is evidence in the last verse that he who wrote it came unharmed out of the flame. We have in the present plaintive song, AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN from the persecutions of earth. A spiritual eye may see Jesus here.*

DIVISIONS.—*There are no very clear lines of demarcation between the parts; but we prefer the divisions adopted by that precious old commentator, David Dickson. In verses 1—4, David craves justice in the controversy between him and his oppressors. In verses 5 and 6, he requests of the Lord grace to act rightly while under the trial. From verse 7—12, he seeks protection from his foes, whom he graphically describes; and in verses 13 and 14, pleads that they may be disappointed; closing the whole in the most comfortable confidence that all would certainly be well with himself at the last.*

EXPOSITION.

HEAR the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer,
that goeth not out of feigned lips.

2 Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

3 Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited *me* in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.

4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept *me* from the paths of the destroyer.

1. "*Hear the right, O Lord.*" He that has the worst cause makes the most noise; hence the oppressed soul is apprehensive that its voice may be drowned, and therefore pleads in this one verse for a hearing no less than three times. The troubled heart craves for the ear of the great Judge, persuaded that with him to hear is to redress. If our God could not or would not hear us, our state would be deplorable indeed; and yet some professors set such small store by the mercy-seat, that God does not hear them for the simple reason that they neglect to plead. As well have no house if we persist like gipsies in living in the lanes and commons; as well have no mercy-seat as be always defending our own cause and never going to God. There is more fear that *we* will not hear the Lord than that the Lord will not hear us. "*Hear the right;*" it is well if our case is good in itself and can be urged as a right one, for right shall never be wronged by our righteous Judge; but if our suit be marred by our infirmities, it is a great privilege that we may make mention of the righteousness of our Lord Jesus, which is ever prevalent on high. *Right* has a voice which Jehovah always hears; and if my wrongs clamour against me with great force and fury, I will pray the Lord to hear that still louder and mightier voice of the right, and the rights of his dear Son. "*Hear, O God, the just One;*" *i.e.*, "*hear the Messiah.*" is a rendering adopted by Jerome, and admired by Bishop Horsley, whether correct or not as a translation, it is proper enough as a plea. Let the reader plead it at the throne of the righteous God, even when all other arguments are unavailing.

"*Attend unto my cry.*" This shows the vehemence and earnestness of the petitioner; he is no mere talker, he weeps and laments. Who can resist a cry? A real hearty, bitter, piteous cry, might almost melt a rock, there can be no fear of its prevalence with our heavenly Father. A cry is our earliest utterance, and in many ways the most natural of human sounds; if our prayer should like the

infant's cry be more natural than intelligent, and more earnest than elegant, it will be none the less eloquent with God. There is a mighty power in a child's cry to prevail with a parent's heart. "*Give ear unto my prayer.*" Some repetitions are not vain. The reduplication here used is neither superstition nor tautology, but is like the repeated blow of a hammer hitting the same nail on the head to fix it the more effectually, or the continued knocking of a beggar at the gate who cannot be denied an alms. "*That goeth not out of feigned lips.*" Sincerity is a *sine quâ non* in prayer. Lips of deceit are detestable to man and much more to God. In intercourse so hallowed as that of prayer, hypocrisy even in the remotest degree is as fatal as it is foolish. Hypocritical piety is double iniquity. He who would feign and flatter had better try his craft with a fool like himself, for to deceive the all-seeing One is as impossible as to take the moon in a net, or to lead the sun into a snare. He who would deceive God is himself already most grossly deceived. Our sincerity in prayer has no merit in it, any more than the earnestness of a mendicant in the street; but at the same time the Lord has regard to it, through Jesus, and will not long refuse his ear to an honest and fervent petitioner.

2. "*Let my sentence come forth from thy presence.*" The Psalmist has now grown bold by the strengthening influence of prayer, and he now treats the Judge of all the earth to give sentence upon his case. He had been libelled, basely and maliciously libelled; and having brought his action before the highest court, he, like an innocent man, has no desire to escape the enquiry, but even invites and sues for judgment. He does not ask for secrecy, but would have the result come forth to the world. He would have sentence pronounced and executed forthwith. In some matters we may venture to be as bold as this; but except we can plead something better than our own supposed innocence, it were terrible presumption thus to challenge the judgment of a sin-hating God. With Jesus as our complete and all-glorious righteousness we need not fear, though the day of judgment should commence at once, and hell open her mouth at our feet, but might joyfully prove the truth of our hymn writer's holy boast—

"Bold shall I stand in that great day;
For who ought to my charge shall lay?
While, through thy blood, absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame."

"*Let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.*" Believers do not desire any other judge than God, or to be excused from judgment, or even to be judged on principles of partiality. No; our hope does not lie in the prospect of favouritism from God, and the consequent suspension of his law; we expect to be judged on the same principles as other men, and through the blood and righteousness of our Redeemer we shall pass the ordeal unscathed. The Lord will weigh us in the scales of justice fairly and justly; he will not use false weights to permit us to escape, but with the sternest equity those balances will be used upon us as well as upon others; and with our blessed Lord Jesus as our all in all we tremble not, for we shall not be found wanting. In David's case, he felt his cause to be so right that he simply desired the Divine eyes to rest upon the matter, and he was confident that equity would give him all that he needed.

3. "*Thou hast proved mine heart.*" Like Peter, David uses the argument, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." It is a most assuring thing to be able to appeal at once to the Lord, and call upon our Judge to be a witness for our defence. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." "*Thou hast visited me in the night.*" As if he had said, "Lord, thou hast entered my house at all hours; and thou hast seen me when no one else was nigh; thou hast come upon me unawares and marked my unrestrained actions, and thou knowest whether or no I am guilty of the crimes laid at my door." Happy man who can thus remember the omniscient eye, and the omnipresent visitor, and find comfort in the remembrance. We hope we have had our midnight visits from our Lord, and truly they are sweet; so sweet that the recollection of them sets us longing for more of such condescending communings. Lord, if, indeed, we had been hypocrites, should we have had such fellowship, or feel such hungerings after a renewal of it? "*Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing.*" Surely the Psalmist means nothing hypocritical or wicked in the sense in which his slanderers accused him; for if the Lord should put the best of his people into the crucible, the dross would be a fearful sight, and would make penitence

open her sluices wide. Assayers very soon detect the presence of alloy, and when the chief of all assayers shall, at the last, say of us that he has found nothing, it will be a glorious hour indeed—"They are without fault before the throne of God." Even here, as viewed in our covenant Head, the Lord sees no sin in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel; even the all-detecting glance of Omniscience can see no flaw where the great Substitute covers all with beauty and perfection. "*I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*" Oh those sad lips of ours! we had need purpose to purpose if we would keep them from exceeding their bounds. The number of diseases of the tongue is as many as the diseases of all the rest of the man put together, and they are more inveterate. Hands and feet one may bind, but who can fetter the lips? iron bands may hold a madman, but what chains can restrain the tongue? It needs more than a purpose to keep this nimble offender within its proper range. Lion-taming and serpent-charming are not to be mentioned in the same day as tongue-taming, for the tongue can no man tame. Those who have to smart from the falsehoods of others should be the more jealous over themselves; perhaps this led the Psalmist to register this holy resolution; and, moreover, he intended thereby to aver that if he had said too much in his own defence, it was not intentional, for he desired in all respects to tune his lips to the sweet and simple music of truth. Notwithstanding all this David was slandered, as if to show us that the purest innocence will be bemired by malice. There is no sunshine without a shadow, no ripe fruit unpecked by the birds.

4. "*Concerning the works of men.*" While we are in the midst of men we shall have their works thrust under our notice, and we shall be compelled to keep a corner in our diary headed "concerning the works of men." To be quite clear from the dead works of carnal humanity is the devout desire of souls who are quickened by the Holy Spirit. "*By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.*" He had kept the highway of Scripture, and not chosen the bye-paths of malice. We should soon imitate the example of the worst of men if the grace of God did not use the Word of God as the great preservative from evil. The paths of the destroyer have often tempted us; we have been prompted to become destroyers too, when we have been sorely provoked, and resentment has grown warm; but we have remembered the example of our Lord, who would not call fire from heaven upon his enemies, but meekly prayed, "Father, forgive them." All the ways of sin are the paths of Satan,—the Apollyon or Abaddon, both of which words signify the destroyer. Foolish indeed are those who give their hearts to the old murderer, because for the time he panders to their evil desires. That heavenly Book which lies neglected on many a shelf is the only guide for those who would avoid the enticing and entangling mazes of sin; and it is the best means of preserving the youthful pilgrim from ever treading those dangerous ways. We must follow the one or the other; the Book of Life, or the way of death; the word of the Holy Spirit, or the suggestion of the Evil Spirit. David could urge as the proof of his sincerity that he had no part or lot with the ungodly in their ruinous ways. How can we venture to plead our cause with God, unless we also can wash our hands clean of all connection with the enemies of the Great King?

5 Hold up my goings in thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not.

6 I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, *and hear* my speech.

5. Under trial it is not easy to behave ourselves aright; a candle is not easily kept alight when many envious mouths are puffing at it. In evil times prayer is peculiarly needful, and wise men resort to it at once. Plato said to one of his disciples, "When men speak ill of thee, live so that no one will believe them;" good enough advice, but he did not tell us how to carry it out. We have a precept here incorporated in an example; if we would be preserved, we must cry to the Preserver, and enlist divine support upon our side. "*Hold up my goings*"—as a careful driver holds up his horse when going down hill. We have all sorts of paces, both fast and slow, and the road is never long of one sort, but with God to hold up our goings, nothing in the pace or in the road can cast down. He who has been down once and cut his knees sadly, even to the bone, had need redouble his zeal when using this prayer; and all of us, since we are so weak on our legs through Adam's fall, had need use it every hour of the day. If a perfect father fell, how shall an imperfect son dare to boast? "*In thy paths.*" Forsaking Satan's paths,

he prayed to be upheld in God's paths. We cannot keep *from* evil without keeping to good. If the bushel be not full of wheat, it may soon be once more full of chaff. In all the appointed ordinances and duties of our most holy faith, may the Lord enable us to run through his upholding grace! "*That my footsteps slip not.*" What! slip in God's ways? Yes, the road is good, but our feet are evil, and therefore slip, even on the King's highway. Who wonders if carnal men slide and fall in ways of their own choosing, which, like the vale of Siddim, are full of deadly slime-pits? One may trip over an ordinance as well as over a temptation. Jesus Christ himself is a stumbling-block to some, and the doctrines of grace have been the occasion of offence to many. Grace alone can hold up our goings in the paths of truth.

6. "*I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God.*" Thou hast always heard me, O my Lord, and therefore I have the utmost confidence in again approaching thine altar. Experience is a blessed teacher. He who has tried the faithfulness of God in hours of need, has great boldness in laying his case before the throne. The well of Bethlehem, from which we drew such cooling draughts in years gone by, our souls long for still; nor will we leave it for the broken cisterns of earth. "*Incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.*" Stoop out of heaven and put thine ear to my mouth; give me thine ear all to myself, as men do when they lean over to catch every word from their friend. The Psalmist here comes back to his first prayer, and thus sets us an example of pressing our suit again and again, until we have a full assurance that we have succeeded.

7 Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust *in thee* from those that rise up *against them*.

8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

9 From the wicked that oppress me, *from my* deadly enemies, *who* compass me about.

10 They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.

11 They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;

12 Like as a lion *that* is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.

7. "*Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness.*" Marvellous in its antiquity, its distinguishing character, its faithfulness, its immutability, and above all, marvellous in the wonders which it works. That marvellous grace which has redeemed us with the precious blood of God's only begotten, is here invoked to come to the rescue. That grace is sometimes hidden; the text says, "*Shew it.*" Present enjoyments of divine love are matchless cordials to support fainting hearts. Believer, what a prayer is this! Consider it well. O Lord, shew thy marvellous lovingkindness; shew it to my intellect, and remove my ignorance; shew it to my heart, and revive my gratitude; shew it to my faith, and renew my confidence; shew it to my experience, and deliver me from all my fears. The original word here used is the same which in Psalm iv. 3 is rendered *set apart*, and it has the force of, Distinguish thy mercies, set them out, and set apart the choicest to be bestowed upon me in this hour of my severest affliction. "*O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.*" The title here given to our gracious God is eminently consolatory. He is the God of salvation; it is his present and perpetual habit to save believers; he puts forth his best and most glorious strength, using his right hand of wisdom and might, to save all those, of whatsoever rank or class, who trust themselves with him. Happy faith thus to secure the omnipotent protection of heaven! Blessed God, to be thus gracious to unworthy mortals, when they have but grace to rely upon thee! The right hand of God is interposed between the saints and all harm; God is never at a loss for means; his own bare hand is enough. He works without tools as well as with them.

8. "*Keep me as the apple of the eye.*" No part of the body more precious, more tender, and more carefully guarded than the eye; and of the eye, no portion more peculiarly to be protected than the central apple, the pupil, or, as the Hebrew calls it, "the daughter of the eye." The all-wise Creator has placed the eye in a well-protected position; it stands surrounded by projecting bones like Jerusalem

encircled by mountains. Moreover, its great Author has surrounded it with many tunics of inward covering, besides the hedge of the eyebrows, the curtain of the eyelids, and the fence of the eyelashes; and, in addition to this, he has given to every man so high a value for his eyes, and so quick an apprehension of danger, that no member of the body is more faithfully cared for than the organ of sight. Thus, Lord, keep thou me, for I trust I am one with Jesus, and so a member of his mystical body. "*Hide me under the shadow of thy wings.*" Even as the parent bird completely shields her brood from evil, and meanwhile cherishes them with the warmth of her own heart, by covering them with her wings, so do thou with me, most condescending God, for I am thine offspring, and thou hast a parent's love in perfection. This last clause is in the Hebrew in the future tense, as if to show that what the writer had asked for but a moment before he was now sure would be granted to him. Confident expectation should keep pace with earnest supplication.

9. "*From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.*" The foes from whom David sought to be rescued were wicked men. It is hopeful for us when our enemies are God's enemies. They were *deadly enemies*, whom nothing but his death would satisfy. The foes of a believer's soul are mortal foes most emphatically, for they who war against our faith aim at the very life of our life. Deadly sins are deadly enemies, and what sin is there which hath not death in its bowels? These foes *oppressed* David, they laid his spirit waste, as invading armies ravage a country, or as wild beasts desolate a land. He likens himself to a besieged city, and complains that his foes *compass him about*. It may well quicken our business upward, when all around us, every road, is blockaded by deadly foes. This is our daily position, for all around us dangers and sins are lurking. O God, do thou protect us from them all.

10. "*They are inclosed in their own fat.*" Luxury and gluttony beget vain-glorious fatness of heart, which shuts up its gates against all compassionate emotions and reasonable judgments. The old proverb says that full bellies make empty skulls, and it is yet more true that they frequently make empty hearts. The rankest weeds grow out of the fattest soil. Riches and self-indulgence are the fuel upon which some sins feed their flames. Pride and fulness of bread were Sodom's twin sins. (Ezek. xvi. 49.) Fed hawks forget their masters; and the moon at its fullest is furthest from the sun. Eglon was a notable instance that a well-fed corporation is no security to life, when a sharp message comes from God, addressed to the inward vitals of the body. "*With their mouth they speak proudly.*" He who adores himself will have no heart to adore the Lord. Full of selfish pleasure within his heart, the wicked man fills his mouth with boastful and arrogant expressions. Prosperity and vanity often lodge together. Woe to the fed ox when it bellows at its owner, the poleaxe is not far off.

11. "*They have now compassed us in our steps.*" The fury of the ungodly is aimed not at one believer alone, but at all the band; they have compassed us. All the race of the Jews were but a morsel for Haman's hungry revenge, and all because of one Mordecai. The prince of darkness hates all the saints for their Master's sake. The Lord Jesus is one of the *us*, and herein is our hope. He is the Breaker, and will clear a way for us through the hosts which environ us. The hatred of the powers of evil is continuous and energetic, for they watch every *step*, hoping that the time may come when they shall catch us by surprise. If our spiritual adversaries thus compass every step, how anxiously should we guard all our movements, lest by any means we should be betrayed into evil! "*They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*" Trapp wittily explains this metaphor by an allusion to a bull when about to run at his victim; he lowers his head, looks downward, and then concentrates all his force in the dash which he makes. It most probably denotes the malicious jealousy with which the enemy watches the steps of the righteous; as if they studied the ground on which they trod, and searched after some wrong footmark to accuse them for the past, or some stumbling-stone to cast in their future path to trip them in days to come.

12. Lions are not more greedy, nor their ways more cunning than are Satan and his helpers when engaged against the children of God. The blood of souls the adversary thirsts after, and all his strength and craft are exercised to the utmost to satisfy his detestable appetite. We are weak and foolish like sheep; but we have a shepherd wise and strong, who knows the old lion's wiles, and is more than a match for his force; therefore will we not fear, but rest in safety in the fold. Let

us beware, however, of our lurking foe; and in those parts of the road were we feel most secure, let us look about us lest, peradventure, our foe should leap upon us.

13 Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, *which is thy sword*:

14 From men *which are thy hand*, O LORD, from men of the world, *which have their portion in this life*, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid *treasure*: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes.

13. "Arise, O Lord." The more furious the attack, the more fervent the Psalmist's prayer. His eye rests singly upon the Almighty, and he feels that God has but to rise from the seat of his patience and the work will be performed at once. Let the lion spring upon us, if Jehovah steps between we need no better defence. When God meets our foe face to face in battle, the conflict will soon be over. "Disappoint him." Be beforehand with him, outwit and outrun him. Appoint it otherwise than he has appointed, and so disappoint him. "Cast him down." Prostrate him. Make him sink upon his knees. Make him bow as the conquered bows before the conqueror. What a glorious sight will it be to behold Satan prostrate beneath the foot of our glorious Lord! Haste, glorious day! "Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword." He recognizes the most profane and oppressive as being under the providential rule of the King of kings, and used as a sword in the divine hand. What can a sword do unless it be wielded by a hand? No more could the wicked annoy us, unless the Lord permitted them so to do. Most translators are, however, agreed that this is not the correct reading, but that it should be as Calvin puts it, "Deliver my soul from the ungodly man by thy sword." Thus David contrasts the sword of the Lord with human aids and reliefs, and rests assured that he is safe enough under the patronage of heaven.

14. Almost every word of this verse has furnished matter for discussion to scholars, for it is very obscure. We will, therefore, rest content with the common version, rather than distract the reader with divers translations. "From men which are thy hand." Having styled the ungodly a sword in his Father's hand, he now likens them to that hand itself, to set forth his conviction that God could as easily remove their violence as a man moves his own hand. He will never slay his child with his own hand. "From men of the world," mere earthworms; not men of the world to come, but mere dwellers in this narrow sphere of mortality; having no hopes or wishes beyond the ground on which they tread. "Which have their portion in this life." Like the prodigal, they have their portion, and are not content to wait their Father's time. Like Passion in the "Pilgrim's Progress," they have their best things first, and revel during their little hour. Luther was always afraid lest he should have his portion here, and therefore frequently gave away sums of money which had been presented to him. We cannot have earth and heaven too for our choice and portion; wise men choose that which will last the longest. "Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure." Their sensual appetite gets the gain which it craved for. God gives to these swine the husks which they hunger for. A generous man does not deny dogs their bones; and our generous God gives even his enemies enough to fill them, if they were not so unreasonable as never to be content. Gold and silver which are locked up in the dark treasuries of the earth are given to the wicked liberally, and they therefore roll in all manner of carnal delights. Every dog has his day, and they have theirs, and a bright summer's day it seems; but ah! how soon it ends in night! "They are full of children." This was their fondest hope, that a race from their loins would prolong their names far down the page of history, and God has granted them this also; so that they have all that heart can wish. What enviable creatures they seem, but it is only seeming! "They are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes." They were fat housekeepers, and yet leave no lean wills. Living and dying they lacked for nothing but grace, and alas! that lack spoils everything. They had a fair portion within the little circle of time, but eternity entered not into their calculations. They were penny wise, but pound foolish; they remembered the present, and forgot the future; they fought for the shell, and lost the kernel. How fine a description have we here of many a successful merchant, or popular statesman; and it is, at first sight, very showy and tempting, but in contrast with the glories of the world to come, what are these paltry molehills

joys. Self, self, self, all these joys begin and end in basest selfishness ; but oh, our God, how rich are those who begin and end in thee ! From all the contamination and injury which association with wordly men is sure to bring us, deliver thou us, O God !

15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

15. "As for me." "I neither envy nor covet these men's happiness, but partly have and partly hope for a far better." To behold God's face and to be changed by that vision into his image, so as to partake in his righteousness, this is my noble ambition ; and in the prospect of this I cheerfully waive all my present enjoyments. My satisfaction is to come ; I do not look for it as yet. I shall sleep awhile, but I shall wake at the sound of the trumpet ; wake to everlasting joy, because I arise in thy likeness, O my God and King ! Glimpses of glory good men have here below to stay their sacred hunger, but the full feast awaits them in the upper skies. Compared with this deep, ineffable, eternal fulness of delight, the joys of the worldling are as a glowworm to the sun, or the drop of a bucket to the ocean.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Title.—"A prayer of David." Since many of the Psalms consist of *prayers*, the question may be asked why such an inscription more especially belongs to this. But though the others contain divers prayers mixed with other matters, this is a supplication through its whole course.—*The Venerable Bede*, 672—735.

Verse 1.—"Hear . . . attend . . . give ear." This petition repeated thrice, indicates a great power of feeling and many tears ; because the craft of the ungodly, in truth, grieves and afflicts the spiritual man more than their power and violence, for we can get a knowledge of open force and violence, and, when we see the danger, can in some way guard against it.—*Martin Luther*.

Verse 1.—"That goeth not out of feigned lips."—There are such things as "*feigned lips* ;" a contradiction between the heart and the tongue, a clamour in the voice and scoffing in the soul, a crying to God, "Thou art my father, the guide of my youth ;" and yet speaking and doing evil to the utmost of our power (Jer. iii. 4, 5), as if God could be imposed upon by fawning pretences, and, like old Isaac, take Jacob for Esau, and be cozened by the smell of his garments ; as if he could not discern the negro heart under an angel's garb. . . . This is an unworthy conceit of God, to fancy that we can satisfy for inward sins, and avert approaching judgments by external offerings, by a loud voice, with a false heart, as if God (like children), would be pleased with the glittering of an empty shell, or the rattling of stones, the thinking of money, a mere voice, and crying without inward frames and intentions of service.—*Stephen Charnock*.

Verse 1.—"Not out of feigned lips." It is observable, that the eagle soareth on high, little intending to fly to heaven, but to gain her prey ; and so it is that many do carry a great deal of seeming devotion in lifting up their eyes towards heaven ; but they do it only to accomplish with more ease, safety, and applause their wicked and damnable designs here on earth ; such as without are Catos, within Neros ; hear them, no man better ; search and try them, no man worse ; they have Jacob's voice, but Esau's hands ; they profess like saints, but practise little Satans ; they have their long prayers, but short prayings ; they are like apothecaries' gallipots—having without the title of some excellent preservative, but within they are full of deadly poison ; counterfeit holiness is their cloak for all manner of villainies, and the midwife to bring forth all their devilish designs.—*Peter Bales*, in *Spencer's "Things New and Old."*

Verse 1.—"Not out of feigned lips." Not only a righteous cause, but a righteous prayer are urged as motives why God should hear. Calvin remarks on the importance of joining prayer to the testimony of a good conscience, lest we defraud God of his honour by not committing all judgment to him.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 1.—Though thy prayers be never so well framed in regard of words, and

reverently performed as to thy external gestures ; yet all is nothing, *if thy heart be not in the duty*. For prayer is not a work of the head, or hand, or eyes only, but chiefly a work of the heart, and therefore called in Scripture, the "pouring out of the soul" (1 Sam. i. 15) ; and the "pouring out of the heart." Psalm lxii. 8. And, indeed, the very soul of prayer lieth in the pouring out of the soul before the Lord. Whosoever, therefore, thou drawest near unto God in prayer, let it be with thine heart and soul, otherwise thou canst have no assurance of audience, and acceptance ; for as Cyprian speaketh, *Quomodo te audiri a Deo postulas*, etc. How canst thou expect the Lord should hear thee, when thou hearest not thyself ? or that he should regard thy prayers, when thou regardest not what thou prayest ? Certainly that prayer reacheth not the heart of God, which reacheth not our own.—*Thomas Gouge*, 1605—1681.

Verse 2.—David appeals unto God to judge the righteousness of his heart towards Saul—"Let my sentence come forth from thy presence." From Saul and his courtiers there comes a hard sentence ; they call me traitor, they call me rebel ; but, Lord, leave me not unto their sentence, "Let my sentence come from thy presence ;" that I know will be another sentence than what cometh from them, for thou hast proved me, and tried me, and findest nothing in me.—*Jeremiah Burroughs*.

Verse 3.—"Thou hast proved mine heart :"—

What ! take it at adventure, and not try
 What metal it is made of ? No, not I.
 Should I now lightly let it pass,
 Take sullen lead for silver, sounding brass,
 Instead of solid gold, alas !
 What would become of it in the great day
 Of making jewels, 'twould be cast away.

The heart thou giv'st me must be such a one,
 As is the same throughout. I will have none
 But that which will abide the fire.
 'Tis not a glitt'ring outside I desire,
 Whose seeming shows do soon expire :
 But real worth within, which neither dross,
 Nor base alloys, make subject unto loss.

If, in the composition of thine heart,
 A stubborn, steely wilfulness have part,
 That will not bow and bend to me,
 Save only in a mere formality
 Of tinsel-trimm'd hypocrisy,
 I care not for it, though it show as fair
 As the first blush of the sun-gilded air.

The heart that in my furnace will not melt,
 When it the glowing heat thereof hath felt,
 Turn liquid, and dissolve in tears
 Of true repentance for its faults, that hears
 My threat'ning voice, and never fears,
 Is not an heart worth having. If it be
 An heart of stone, 'tis not an heart for me.

The heart, that, cast into my furnace, spits
 And sparkles in my face, falls into fits
 Of discontented grudging, whines
 When it is broken of its will, repines
 At the least suffering, declines
 My fatherly correction, is an heart
 On which I care not to bestow mine art.

* * * * *

The heart that vapours out itself in smoke,
 And with these cloudy shadows thinks to cloke
 Its empty nakedness, how much
 Soever thou esteamest, it is such
 As never will endure my touch.

I'll bring it to my furnace, and there see
 What it will prove, what it is like to be.
 If it be gold, it will be sure
 The hottest fire that can be to endure.
 And I shall draw it out more pure.
 Affliction may refine, but cannot waste
 That heart wherein my love is fixed fast.

Francis Quarles.

Verse 3.—“*Thou hast visited me in the night,*” etc. In the night the soul is free from business with the world, and therefore freest for business with God; and then did God prove and visit David, that is, examine and sift him, by calling to his mind all his ways and works in former passages; and the issue of this trial was *he found nothing*; not that his soul was empty of good things, or that there was nothing evil in him; but God, upon examination, found nothing of that evil in him which some men suspected him of; namely, either any ill will or evil design against Saul, in reference to whom he called his cause a righteous cause, or “*the right*” (verse 1); “*Hear the right, O Lord.*”—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 3 (third clause, *New Translation*).—“*Thou hast smelted me, and found in me no dross.*” A metaphor taken from the smelting of metals to purify them from extraneous matter.—*Geddes.*

Verse 3.—“*Proved . . . visited in the night . . . tried.*” Tribulation, whereby, when examined, I was found righteous, is called not only night, in that it is wont to disturb with fear, but fire in that it actually burns.—*Augustine.*

Verse 3.—“*I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*”—Wherefore, if thou be upon a mountain, look not backward again unto Sodom as Lot’s wife did; if thou be within the ark, fly not out again into the world as Noah’s crew did; if thou be well washed, return not again to the mire as the hog doth; if thou be clean, run not again to thy filth, as the dog doth; if thou be going towards the land of Canaan, think not on the flesh-pots of Egypt; if thou be marching against the host of Midian, drink not of the waters of Harod; if thou be upon the housetop, come not down; if thou have set thy hand to the plough, look not behind thee; remember not those vices which are behind thee.—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verses 3, 4, 5.—Where there is true grace, there is hatred of all sin, for hatred is *πρὸς τὸ ἕνεος*. Can a man be resolved to commit what he hates? No, for his inward aversion would secure him more against it than all outward obstacles. As this inward purpose of a good man is against all sin, so more particularly against that which doth so easily beset him. David seems in several places to be naturally inclined to lying, but he takes up a particular resolution against it: (verse 3), “*I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress;*” *אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה*—I have contrived to waylay and intercept the sin of lying when it hath an occasion to approach me. A good man hath not only purposes, but he endeavours to fasten and strengthen those purposes by prayer; so David (verse 5), “*Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.*” He strengthens himself by stirring up a liveliness in duty, and by avoiding occasions of sin; (verse 4), “*I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer;*” whereas, a wicked man neither steps out of the way of temptation, nor steps up to God for strength against it.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 4.—“*Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer:*” as if he had said, Would you know how it comes to pass that I escape those ungodly works and practices which men ordinarily take liberty to do? I must ascribe it to the good word of God; it is this I consult with, and by it I am kept from those foul ways whereinto others, that make no use of the word for their defence, are carried by Satan the destroyer. Can we go against sin and Satan with a better weapon than Christ used to vanquish the tempter with? And, certainly, Christ did it to set us an example how we should come armed into the field against them; for Christ could with one beam shot from his Deity (if he had pleased to exert it), have as easily laid the bold fiend at his foot, as afterward he did them that came to attack him; but he chose rather to conceal the majesty of his Divinity, and let Satan come up closer to him, that so he might confound him with the word, and thereby give him a proof of that sword of his saints, which he was to leave them for their defence against the same enemy. The devil is set out by the leviathan (Isaiah xxvii. 1), him God threatens to punish with his strong sword; alluding to that great fish, the whale, which fears no fish

like the sword-fish, by whom this great devourer of all other fish is so often killed; for, receiving one prick from his sword, he hasteneth to the shore, and beats himself against it till he dies. Thus the devil, the great devourer of souls, who sports himself in the sea of this world, as the leviathan in the waters, and swallows the greatest part of mankind without any power to make resistance against him, is himself vanquished by the word. When he has to do with a saint armed with this sword, and instructed how to use this weapon, he then, and not till then, meets his match.—*William Gurnall*.

Verse 4.—“*By the word of thy lips,*” etc. It is a great relief against temptations to have the word ready. The word is called, “The sword of the Spirit,” Eph. vi. 17. In spiritual conflicts there is none like to that. Those that ride abroad in time of danger, will not be without a sword. We are in danger, and had need handle the sword of the Spirit. The more ready the Scripture is with us, the greater advantage in our conflicts and temptations. When the devil came to assault Christ, he had Scripture ready for him, whereby he overcame the tempter. The door is barred upon Satan, and he cannot find such easy entrance when the word is hid in our hearts, and made use of pertinently. “I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong.” Where lies their strength? “And the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” 1 John ii. 14. Oh, it is a great advantage when we have the word not only by us, but in us, engrafted in the heart; when it is present with us, we are more able to resist the assaults of Satan. Either a man forgets the word, or hath lost his affection to it, before he can be drawn to sin.—*Thomas Manton*.

Verse 5.—“*Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.*” Lord, whatsoever the wrath of Saul be against me, yet let neither that, nor any other thing put me out of thy way, but keep my heart close unto thee, and keep my paths in thy way; let not my footsteps so much as slide from thee, for, Lord, they watch for my halting; if they can find but the least slip from me, they take advantage of it to the utmost; and I am a poor and a weak creature, therefore Lord help me, that my footsteps may not slide.—*Jeremiah Burroughs*.

Verse 5.—“*Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.*” As a stone cast up into the air cannot go any higher, neither yet there abide when the power of the hurler ceaseth to drive it; even so, seeing our corrupt nature can go downward only, and the devil, the world, and the flesh, driveth to the same way; how can we proceed further in virtue, or stand therein, when we are tempted, if our merciful and good God do not by his Holy Spirit, from time to time, guide and govern us?—*Robert Cawdray*.

Verse 5.—“*Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.*” Lord, hold me up, that I may hold out. Thou hast set the crown at the end of the race; let me run the race, that I may wear the crown. It was Beza’s prayer, and let it be ours, “Lord, perfect what thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven.”—*Thomas Watson*.

Verse 5.—In fierce assaults and strong temptations, when Satan layeth siege to the soul, shooting his fiery darts, and using stratagems of policy, joining his endeavours with our corruptions, as wind with tide, then we have cause to pray as David, “*Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.*” The apostle also found he had need of help from heaven when he was assaulted, and therefore he prayed “*thrice,*” that the thing that he feared might depart from him. 2 Cor. xii. Christ hath taught us to pray daily, “Lead us not into temptation,” for it is dangerous; and then temptations are most dangerous, when, 1. *Most suitable*—when Satan joins with our disposition or constitution; 2. *Continual*; 3. When *opportunity and power is greatest.*—*Joseph Symonds*.

Verse 6.—“*I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me.*” I have cried, says the Psalmist, because thou hast heard me. One would think he should have said contrariwise: thou hast heard me because I have cried; yet, he says, I have cried because thou hast heard me; to show that crying doth not always go before hearing with God, as it doth with us; but that God will not only hear our cry, but also hear us before we cry, and will help us.—*T. Playfere*.

Verse 6.—“*I have called upon thee,*” etc. Prayer is the best remedy in a calamity. This is indeed a true *catholicon*, a general remedy for every malady. Not like the *empric’s catholicon*, which sometimes may work, but for the most part fails, but

that which upon assured evidence and constant experience hath its *probatum est*; being that which the most wise, learned, honest, and skilful Physician that ever was, or can be, hath prescribed, even he that teacheth us how to bear what is to be borne, or how to heal and help what hath been borne.—*William Gouge, 1575—1653.*

Verse 6.—I have called upon thee formerly, therefore, Lord, hear me now. It will be a great comfort to us if trouble, when it comes, finds the wheels of prayer a-going, for then may we come with the more boldness to the throne of grace. Tradesmen are willing to oblige those that have been long their customers.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 8.—“*Keep me as the apple of the eye.*” He prays for deliverance (verse 7), “*Show thy marvellous lovingkindness*” to me; Lord, my straits they are marvellous, I know not what to do, whither to turn me, but my eyes are towards thee; as straits are marvellous, so let the lovingkindness of God be marvellous towards me, and “*Keep me as the apple of thy eye.*” O Lord, unto them I am but a dog, a vile creature in the eyes of Saul and those about him: but blessed be thy name, I can look up to thee, and know that I am dear unto thee as *the apple of thy eye.* All the saints of God are dear to God at all times, but the persecuted saints, they are the apple of God’s eye; if at any time they are dear to God, then especially when they are most persecuted; now they are *the apple of his eye*, and *the apple of an eye* is weak, and little able to resist any hurt, but so much the more is the man tender of the apple of his eye. The saints are weak and shiftless for themselves, but the Lord is so much the more tender over them.—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 8.—Does it not appear to thee to be a work of providence, that considering the weakness of the eye, he has protected it with eyelids, as with doors, which whenever there is occasion to use it are opened, and are again closed in sleep? And that it may not receive injury from the winds, he has planted on it eyelashes like a strainer; and over the eyes has disposed the eyebrows like a penthouse, so that the sweat from the head may do no mischief.—*Socrates, in Xenophon.*

Verse 9.—“*From the wicked:*” as though he had said, They are equally enemies to thee and me; not more opposite to me by their cruelty, than by their wickedness they are to thee. Vindicate then, at once, thyself, and deliver me.”—*John Howe.*

Verse 10.—“*They are inclosed in their own fat,*” or *their fat has inclosed them*; either their eyes, that they can hardly see out of them, or their hearts, so that they are stupid and senseless, and devoid of the fear of God; the phrase is expressive of the multitude of their wealth, and increase of power, by which they were swelled with pride and vanity, and neither feared God nor regarded man; so the Targum paraphrases it, “their riches are multiplied, their fat covers them.”—*John Gill.*

Verse 10.—“*They are inclosed in their own fat.*” Their worldly prosperity puffeth them up, and makes them insensible and odourate against all reason and just fear; and the Scripture doth use this term of a fattened heart in this sense, because that the fat of man hath no feeling in it, and those that are very fat are less subject to the passion of fear.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 10.—“*They are inclosed in their own fat.*” To say a man is fat, often means he is very proud. Of one who speaks pompously it is said, “What can we do? *tassi kullap ināl*,” that is, “from the fat of his flesh he declares himself.” “Oh, the fat of his mouth! how largely he talks!” “Take care, fellow! or I will restrain the fat of thy mouth.”—*J. Roberts, in “Oriental Illustrations:” 1844.*

Verse 11.—“*They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*” A man who has people watching him to find out a cause for accusation against him to the king, or to great men, says, “Yes, they are around my legs and my feet; their eyes are always open; they are ever watching my “*savadu*,” “steps;” that is, they are looking for the impress or footsteps in the earth. For this purpose the eyes of the enemies of David were “*bowing down to the earth.*”—*Joseph Roberts.*

Verse 11.—“*They have now compassed us in our steps.*” Like those who destroy game by battue, and so make a ring around their prey from which their victims cannot escape.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 11.—“*They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*” The allusion

probably is to the huntsman tracing the footmarks of the animal he pursues.—*Religious Tract Society's Commentary.*

Verse 11.—“*They have set their eyes bowing to the earth.*” It is an allusion, as I conceive, to hunters, who go poring upon the ground to prick the hare, or to find the print of the hare's claw, when the hounds are at a loss, and can make nothing of it by the scent.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 12.—“*Like a lion,*” etc. In “*Paradise Lost,*” we have a fine poetical conception of the arch enemy prowling around our first parents when he first beheld their happiness, and resolved to ruin them.

—— About them round
A lion now, he stalks with fiery glare;
Then, as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu, two gentle fawns at play,
Straight crouches close, then rising, changes off
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both,
Grip'd in each paw.

John Milton.

Verse 12.—We were consulting as to the best means of getting at a rhinoceros cow which we saw standing at some distance under a tree, when a troop of impalas came charging down, with a fine old lioness after them. We went and saw her lying down, but so flat to the ground, head and all, that no man could shoot with any certainty; and she never for a moment took her eyes from us. When we got up to her, she was lying down flat as a plate to the ground; but her head might have been on a pivot, as her watchful eye glared on us all round, without appearing to move her body, as we decreased the circle, in the hopes she would stand up and give us a fair chance of a shot behind the shoulder. . . . I looked for a tree to climb up, near enough to make tolerably sure of my shot, and was just getting up one, when the lioness made off.—*William Charles Baldwin, F.R.G.S., in "African Hunting," 1863.*

Verse 13.—“*The wicked, which is thy sword.*”—The devil and his instruments both are God's instruments, therefore “*the wicked*” are called his “*sword,*” his “*axe*” (Psalm xvii. 13; Isaiah x. 15); now let God alone to wield the one, and handle the other. He is but a bungler that hurts and hacles his own legs with his own axe; which God should do if his children should be the worse for Satan's temptations. Let the devil choose his way, God is a match for him at every weapon. If he will try it by force of arms, and assaults the saints by persecution, as the “*Lord of hosts*” he will oppose him. If by policy and subtlety, he is ready there also. The devil and his whole council are but fools to God; nay, their wisdom foolishness.—*William Gurnall.*

Verses 13, 14.—“*Thy sword. . . thy hand.*” Thou canst as easily command and manage them, as a man may wield his sword, or move his hand. Wilt thou suffer thine own sword, thine own hand, to destroy thine own servant?—*J. Howe.*

Verse 14 (*first clause*).—How wonderful are the dispensations of the providence of God, who can use even the wicked to promote the present happiness and the final salvation of his saints!—*J. Edwards, M.A., 1856.*

Verse 14.—“*Men of the world, which have their portion in this life.*” Time and this lower world, bound all their hopes and fears. They have no serious believing apprehensions of anything beyond this present life; therefore, have nothing to withhold them from the most injurious violence, if thou withhold them not; men that believe not another world, are the ready actors of any imaginable mischiefs and tragedies in this.—*John Howe.*

Verse 14.—“*Men which are thy hand,*” etc. What shall we say then? Because God maketh use of thy sins, art thou excused? Is not thine evil evil, because he picketh good out of it? Deceive not thyself therein. When thou hast done such service to thy Master and Maker, though seven and seven years, as Jacob did service to Laban, thou shalt lose thy wages and thy thanks too. Oh, well were thou if thou didst but lose, for thou shalt also gain a sorrowful advantage. It is unprofitable, nay, miserable service which thou hast thus bestowed. Babylon shall be the hammer of the Lord a long time to bruise the nations, himself afterwards bruised; Asshur

his rod to scourge his people, but Asshur shall be more scourged. These hammers, rods, axes, saws, other instruments, when they have done their offices, which they never meant, shall be thrown themselves into the fire, and burnt to ashes. Satan did service to God, it cannot be denied, in the afflicting of Job, winnowing of Peter, buffeting of Paul, executing of Judas, and God did a work in all these, either to prove patience, or to confirm faith, or to try strength, or to commend justice; yet is Satan "reserved in chains, under darkness, to the retribution of the great day." Judas did service to God, in getting honour to his blessed name for the redemption of mankind, whilst the world endureth, yet was his wages an alder-tree to hang himself upon, and which is worse, he hangeth in hell for eternal generations. He had his wages, and lost his wages. That which the priest gave him, he lost, and lost his apostleship, but gained the recompense of everlasting unhappiness, and lies in the lowest lake, for the worm and death to gnaw upon without ceasing.

John King.

Verse 14.—"Thy hand." The hand of God, his correcting or cherishing hand, sometimes is an immediate, and sometimes a mediate hand. Sometimes it is immediate, when God by himself doth chasten, or punish, or afflict, when no second cause doth appear or intervene. So it may seem Satan means, when he saith (Job i. 11), "Put forth thy hand," that is, do it thine own self, let no other have the handling of Job but thyself. God doth send such immediate afflictions; a man is afflicted in his body, in his estate, and many other ways, and he cannot find anything in the creature whence it should come; it is an immediate stroke of God, he cannot see how, or which way, or at what door this evil came in upon him; therefore it is called a creating of evil. Isaiah xlv. 7. "I make peace, and create evil." Now creation is out of nothing, there is nothing out of which it is wrought. So many times God bringeth evil upon a people or person when there is no appearance of second causes, no matter out of which it is made, but it comes as a creature, formed by the only hand of God. Sometimes likewise it is called God's hand, when it is the hand of a creature; it is God's hand in a creature's hand; God's hand when it is the hand of wicked men, God's hand when it is Satan's hand. So that place is translated (Psalm xvii. 13, 14), "Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword: from men which are thy hand:" so that "thy hand" may be understood of an instrument; Satan himself is God's hand to punish in that sense, as wicked men here are said to be God's hand: "from men which are thy hand," though there be other readings of that place; some read it, *deliver me from men by thy hand*; and others, *deliver me from men of thy hand*; but our translation may very well carry the sense of the original in it, "from men which are thy hand;" as Nebuchadrezzar, that wicked king, is called *God's servant* (Jer. xliii. 10), "I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar my servant:" God speaks of him as his servant, or as his hand in the thing.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 14.—"Men of the world, which have their portion in this life." The large portion of the wicked in the things of this world, may tell the righteous of how little value this is, in the account of God; in that these things are often given to his enemies plentifully, when denied in such a measure to his children. Now this cannot be because he loves or favours his enemies most; but because these lower things, given them in what degree soever, are so mean in his account, as that his chosen may learn by his distribution of them, to regard them as he does; namely, as no part of their felicity, but as common favours to all his creatures, good or bad, enemies or friends.—*Daniel Wilcox.*

Verse 14.—"Men which have their portion in this life." God gives wicked men a portion here to show unto them what little good there is in all these things, and to show the world what little good there is in all the things that are here below in the world. Certainly if they were much good they should never have them: it is an argument there is no great excellency in the strength of body, for an ox hath it more than you; an argument there is no great excellency in agility of body, for a dog hath it more than you; an argument no great excellency in gay clothes, for a peacock hath them more than you; an argument there is not any great excellency in gold and silver, for the Indians that know not God have them more than you; and if these things had any great worth in them, certainly God would never give them to wicked men—a certain argument. As it is an argument there is no great evil in affliction in this world, because that the saints are so much afflicted; so no great argument there is any great good in this world, for the wicked they enjoy so much of it. Luther hath such an expression as this in his comment upon Genesis,

saith he, "The Turkish empire, as great as it is, is but a crumb, that the Master of the family, that God, casts to dogs:" the whole Turkish empire, such an esteem had Luther of it; and indeed it is no more. All the things of the world, God in giving of them to Turks and wicked ones, his enemies, shows there is not much excellency and good in them: God therefore will cast them promiscuously up and down in the world, because he looks upon them as worthless things; God doth not so much regard whether men be prepared to give him the glory of them, yea or no, they shall have them; however he is content to venture them. Indeed, when God comes unto his choice mercies in Christ, there he looks to have glory from them, and he doth never give them to any, but first he prepares them, that they may give him the glory of those mercies. But it is otherwise with others; us, suppose you see a man gathering of crabs, although swine be under the tree, he cares not much to drive them away; they are but crabs, let them have them; but if he were gathering any choice and precious fruit, if any swine should come under, he drives them away. As for outward things, crabs, the Lord suffers the swine of the world to come grunting and take them up; but when he comes to his choice mercies in his Christ, there he makes a distinction. Oh, this is precious fruit! A blacksmith that is working upon iron, though a great many cinders and little bits of iron fly up and down, he regards them not; but a goldsmith that is working upon gold, he preserves every rag, and every dust of gold; and a lapidary that is working upon precious stones, every little bit he will be sure to preserve; a carpenter that is only hewing of timber, he regards it not much if chips fly up and down; but it is not so with a lapidary. So these outward things are but as the chips and cinders, and such kind of things as those are, and therefore God ever gives a portion to wicked men out of them.—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 14.—"Men which have their portion in this life." I have read of Gregory, that being advanced to preferment, professed that there was no Scripture that went so to his heart, that struck such a trembling into his spirit, that daunted him so much, as this Scripture did:—"Here you have your reward, son; in your lifetime you have had your pleasure." Oh, this was a dreadful Scripture that sounded in his ears continually, as Hierom speaks of that Scripture, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment:" night and day he thought that Scripture sounded in his ears; so Gregory:—"Here you have your reward; in this life you have had your pleasure." This was the Scripture that night and day sounded in his ears. O that it might please God to assist so far, to speak out of this Scripture to you, that I might make this Scripture ring in your ears even when you lie upon your beds, after the sermon is done; that yet you may think this Scripture rings in your ears: "*Men of this world, who have their portion in this life.*"—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 14.—"Which have their portion in this life." The earth and the commodities thereof God distributeth without respect of persons, even to them that are his children by creation only, and not by adoption. But yet there is a difference between the prosperity of the one and the other; for the one is but with anxiety of heart (even in laughter their heart is heavy); the others' is with cheerfulness and joy in the Spirit; the one's is a pledge of the greater preferment in the world to come, the others' is their *whole* portion, and as if God should say, "Let them take *that* and look for no more." The one's is with the blessing of the people, who wish they had more; the others' with their curse and hatred, who are grieved that they have so much."—*Miles Smith.*

Verse 14.—"Their portion in this life." The good man's *best*, and the bad man's worst, lie in *shall be's* (Isaiah iii. 10, 11), in reversion. Here Dives had nothing but his "good things," but hereafter he had no good thing. Here Lazarus had his "evil things," but afterwards no evil thing. The good man when he dies, takes his leave of, and departs from, all evil; and the evil man when he dies, takes his leave of, and departs from, all his goods, which was all the good he had. "Now he is comforted, but thou art tormented." Luke xvi. 25. Oh! 'tis a sad thing to have one's *portion of good* only in this life.—*Ralph Venning's "Helps to Piety,"* 1620—1673.

Verse 14.—"This life." There is yet another thing to be seen far more monstrous in this creature; that whereas he is endued with reason and counsel, and knoweth that this life is like unto a shadow, to a dream, to a tale that is told, to a watch in the night, to smoke, to chaff which the wind scattereth, to a water-bubble, and such-like fading things; and that life to come shall never have end; he yet nevertheless setteth his whole mind most carefully upon this present life, which is to-day,

and to-morrow is not ; but of the life which is everlasting he doth not so much as think. If this be not a monster, I know not what may be called monstrous.—*Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 14.—What wicked men possess of this world is all that ever they can hope for : why should we grudge them filled bags, or swelling titles ! it is their whole portion ; they now receive their good things. Hast thou food and clothing ? that is children's fare ; envy not ungodly men, who flaunt it in the gallantry of the world : they have more than you ; but it is all they are like to have ; the Psalmist gives us an account of their estate. They are the *men of this world, which have their portion in this life, and whose bellies God filleth with his hid treasure.* Whereas thou, O Christian, who possesseth nothing, art heir-apparent of heaven, co-heir with Jesus Christ, who is the heir of all things, and hast an infinite mass of riches laid up for thee ; so great and infinite, that all the stars of heaven are too few to account it by : you have no reason to complain of being kept short ; for all that God hath is yours, whether prosperity or adversity, life or death, all is yours. What God gives is for your comfort ; what he denies or takes away is for your trial : it is for the increase of those graces which are far more gracious than any temporal enjoyment. If, by seeing wicked and ungodly men flow in wealth and ease, when thou art forced to struggle against the inconveniences and difficulties of a poor estate, thou hast learnt a holy contempt and disdain of the world, believe it, God hath herein given thee more than if he had given thee the world itself.—*Ezekiel Hopkins.*

Verse 14.—To show that wicked men have often the greatest *portion in this world*, I need not speak much ; the experience of all ages since the beginning of the world confirms it, your own observation, I believe, can seal to it ; however, Scripture abundantly evinces it. The first *murderer* that ever was, carries possession in his very name : *Cain* signifies so much. Gen. iv. 8. Go on in the whole series of Scripture, and you shall find Joseph persecuted by his brethren ; Esau (as Rivet observes on Gen. xxxii.), advanced in the world for a time far above Jacob ; go on, and you find the Israelites, God's peculiar, in captivity, and Pharaoh upon the throne ; Saul ruling, and David in a cave, or in a wilderness ; Job upon the dunghill ; Jeremy in the dungeon ; Daniel in the den, and the children in the furnace, and Nebuchadnezzar on the throne. In the New Testament you have Felix on the bench, Paul at the bar ; Dives in the palace, Lazarus at his gate (Luke xvi. 19) ; he clothed in purple, Lazarus in rags and overspread with sores ; he banqueted and fared deliciously every day, the other desired but the crumbs from the table, and could not have them ; Dives beset with his rich and stately attendance, Lazarus hath no other society but the dogs which came to lick his sores ; all which Austin and Tertullian against Marcion (lib. 4), conceive to be a true history of what was really acted, though others think it parabolical. Job tells us that “the tabernacles of robbers” sometimes “prosper” (Job xii. 6), which prosperity he at large describes (chap. xxi. from verses 7 to 14) ; exalted in “power,” verse 7 ; multiplied in their posterity, verses 8, 11 ; *safe at home*, verse 9 ; *increased abroad*, verse 10 ; have their fill of *pleasure*, verse 12, and *wealth at will*, verse 13. David speaks his own experience of this. Psalm xxxvii. 35 ; lxxiii. 7. So in the text, they enjoy not only common favours, as air to breathe in, earth to walk on ; their bellies are filled with his “*hid treasure*,” and that not for themselves only, but for their posterity too ; they “*leave the rest of their substance to their babes* ;” in a word, “*they have their portion in this life.*”—*John Frost, 1657.*

Verse 14.—A master or lord pays his *servant* his present wages, while he cuts his *son* short in his allowance during his nonage, that he may learn to depend upon his father for the inheritance. Thus doth God, the great Lord of all, deal with his *slaves*, who serve him for the hire of some temporal advantage ; he gives them their present reward and wages ; but though his goodness hath determined a better *portion* to be a reward to the piety and obedience of his *children*, yet he gives it them in reversion, little in hand, that they may learn to live upon the promise, and by faith to depend upon the goodness and faithfulness of their Father for their heavenly inheritance ; that they, walking not by sight but faith (which is a Christian's work and condition here), may “not look at the things which are seen,” etc. 2 Cor. iv. 18. . . . This discovers that rotten foundation upon which many men build their hopes of heaven. Surely (are many ready to argue) if God did not love me he would not give me such a portion in the world. Deceive not thyself in a matter of so great concernment. Thou mayest as well say God loved Judas, because he had the

bags, or Dives, because he fared deliciously, who are now roaring in hell.—*John Frost.*

Verse 14.—The word which denotes the “belly” may have been fixed, by the divine Spirit, to indicate the fact, that a very great proportion of the sin of worldly and depraved characters is connected with the indulgence of base and degrading lusts; and that they abuse the very bounty of heaven, in riveting the chain of sense upon their unhappy souls. But let them remember, that their sensual idolatries will, at last, be followed up by the most fearful visitations of divine wrath.—*John Morison.*

Verse 14.—“*Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure.*” Wicked men may abound in earthly things. They may have the earth and the fulness of it, the earth, and all that is earthly; their bellies are filled by God himself with hidden treasure. Precious things are usually hidden, and all that’s named treasure, though it be but earthly, hath a preciousness in it. Hidden treasures of earth fill their bellies who slight the treasures of heaven, and whose souls shall never have so much as a taste of heavenly treasures: riches and honour are the lots of their inheritance who have no inheritance among those whose lot is glory. They have the earth in their hands (Job ix. 24), who have nothing of heaven in their hearts; they bear sway in the world who are slaves to the world; they govern and order others at their will who are led captive by Satan at his will. Be not offended and troubled to see the reins of government in their hands who know not how to govern themselves, or to see them rule the world who are unworthy to live in the world.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 14.—“*Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure.*” The hearts of saints only are filled with the “hidden manna,” but the bellies of the wicked are often filled with *hidden treasure*; that is, with those dainties and good things which are virtually hidden in, and formally spring out of, the belly and bowels of the earth. The Lord easily grants them their wish in such things, and gives them “*their portion*,” which is all their portion, “*in this life.*” For as they are but common professors, so these are but common mercies, such as many of his enemies receive, who are but fatted as oxen for the slaughter, and fitted for destruction. True happiness is not to be judged by lands or houses, by gold or silver. The world is a narrow bound: unless we get beyond the creature, and set our hopes above this world, we cannot be happy. As hypocrites desire, so they attain much of the world, but they shall attain no more, how much soever they seem to desire it.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 14.—“*Whose belly thou fillest.*” That is, their sensual appetite, as oftentimes that term is used (Rom. xvi. 18; Phil. iii. 19), “*with thy hid treasures*”; namely the riches which either God is wont to hide in the bowels of the earth, or lock up in the repository of providence, dispensing them at his own pleasure.—*John Howe.*

Verse 14.—“*Whose belly thou fillest,*” etc. :—

Thou from thy hidden store,
Their bellies, Lord, hast fill’d;
Their sons are gorg’d, and what is o’er,
To their sons’ sons they yield.

Richard Mant.

Verse 14.—“*They are full of children.*” So it appears by that which follows, it ought to be read, and not according to that gross, but easy (*ὀψων* for *ὀψων*), mistake of some transcribers of the seventy. As if in all this he pleaded thus: “Lord, thou hast abundantly indulged those men already, what need they more? They have themselves, from thy unregarded bounty, their own vast swollen desires sufficiently filled, enough for their own time; and when they can live no longer in their persons, they may in their posterity, and leave not strangers, but their numerous offspring, their heirs. Is it not enough that their avarice be gratified, except their malice be also? that they have whatsoever they can conceive desirable for themselves, unless they may also infer whatever they can think mischievous on me?” To this description of his enemies, he *ex opposito*, subjoins some account of himself in this his closure of the Psalm. “*As for me,*” here he is at his staticque point; and, after some appearing discomposure, his spirit returns to a consistency, in consideration of his own more happy state, which he opposes and prefers to theirs, in the following respects. That they were wicked, he righteous. “I will behold thy face in righteousness.” That their happiness was worldly, terrene, such only as did spring from the earth; his heavenly and divine, such as should

result from the face and image of God. *Theirs* present, temporary, compassed within this life; *his* future, everlasting, to be enjoyed when he should awake. *Theirs* partial, defective, such as would but gratify their bestial part, fill their bellies; *his* adequate, complete (the εὐδαιμονία τοῦ σωτηρίου, a happiness of proportion), such as should satisfy the man. "I shall be satisfied," etc.—*John Howe*.

Verse 14.—"They are full of children." Margin, *their children are full*. The margin probably expresses the sense of the Hebrew better than the text. The literal rendering would be, "satisfied are their sons;" that is, they have enough to satisfy the wants of their children. The expression, "they are full of children," is harsh and unnatural, and is not demanded by the original, or by the main thought in the passage. The obvious signification is, that they have enough for themselves and for their children.—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 15.—"I will behold thy face." I look upon the face of a stranger and it moves me not; but upon a friend, and his face presently transforms mine into a lively, cheerful aspect. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the face of a man his friend" (Prov. xxvii. 17), puts a sharpness and a quickness into his looks. The soul that loves God, opens itself to him, admits his influences and impressions, is easily moulded and wrought to his will, yields to the transforming power of his appearing glory. There is no resistant principle remaining when the love of God is perfected in it; and so overcoming is the first sight of his glory upon the awaking soul, that it perfects it, and so his likeness, both at once.—*John Howe*.

Verse 15.—"I will behold," etc. In the words we have, 1. The time of his complete and consummate happiness—"When I awake." 2. The matter of his happiness, and the manner of enjoying it; the matter and object—"God's face, or likeness;" the manner of enjoying—"I will behold thy face." 3. His perfect disposition and condition in the state of happiness—"I shall behold in righteousness," having my heart perfectly conformed to the will of God, the perfect and adequate rule of righteousness. 4. The measure of his happiness—"I shall be satisfied;" my happiness will be full in the measure, without want of anything that can make me happy; all my desires shall be satisfied, and my happiness in respect of duration shall be eternal, without a shadow or fear of a change.—*William Cobill*.

Verse 15.—He doth profess his resolution, yet notwithstanding all the danger he was in, to go on in the ways of God, and expects a gracious issue; but I, saith he, "will behold thy face in righteousness;" indeed, I cannot behold the face of the king without danger to me; there are a great many that run to kill me, and they desire his face; but though I cannot see his face, yet, Lord, I shall behold thy face; "I will behold thy face," and it shall be "in righteousness;" I will still keep on in the ways of righteousness, and "when I awake"—for I believe that these troubles will not hold long—I shall not sleep in perpetual sleep, but I shall awake and be delivered, and then "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness:" there shall be the manifestation of thy glory to me, that shall satisfy me for all the trouble that I have endured for thy name's sake, that my soul shall say, I have enough.—*Jeremiah Burroughs*.

Verse 15.—"I shall be satisfied," etc. The fulness of the felicity of heaven may appear if we compare it with the joys and comforts of the Holy Spirit. Such they are, as that the Scripture styles them strong consolations (Heb. vi. 17); full joys (John xv. 11); joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. i. 8); abounding consolations. 2 Cor. i. 5. And yet all the joy and peace that believers are partakers of in this life is but as a drop to the ocean, as a single cluster to the whole vintage, as the thyme or honey upon the thigh of a bee to the whole hive fully fraught with it, or as the break and peep of day to the bright noontide. But yet these tastes of the water, wine, and honey of this celestial Canaan, with which the Holy Spirit makes glad the hearts of believers, are both far more desirable and satisfactory than the overflowing streams of all earthly felicities. And there are none who have once tasted of them, but say as the Samaritan woman did, "Lord, give me that water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." John iv. 15. So also the first and early dawns of the heavenly light fill the soul with more serenity, and ravish it with more pure joy, than the brightest sunshine of all worldly splendour can ever do. I have read of a devout person who but dreaming of heaven, the signatures and impression it made upon his fancy were so strong, as that when he awake he knew not his cell, could not distinguish the night from the day, nor

difference by his taste, oil from wine; still he was calling for his vision and saying, *Redde mihi campos floridos, columnam auream, comitem Hieronymum, assistentes angelos*: give me my fresh and fragrant fields again, my golden pillar of light, Jerome my companion, angels my assistants. If heaven in a dream produce such ecstasies as drown and overwhelm the exercises of the senses to inferior objects, what trances and complacencies must the fruition of it work in those who have their whole rational appetite filled, and their body beautified with its endless glory?—*William Spurstow, 1656.*

Verse 15.—“*I shall be satisfied.*” Have you never seen how when they were finishing the interior of buildings they kept the scaffolding up? The old Pope, when he had Michael Angelo employed in decorating the interior of that magnificent structure, the Sistine Chapel, demanded that the scaffolding should be taken down so that he could see the glowing colours that with matchless skill were being laid on. Patiently and assiduously did that noble artist labour, toiling by day, and almost by night, bringing out his prophets and sibyls and pictures wondrous for their beauty and significance, until the work was done. The day before it was done, if you had gone into that chapel and looked up, what would you have seen? Posts, planks, ropes, lime, mortar, slop, dirt. But when all was finished, the workmen came, and the scaffolding was removed. And then, although the floor was yet covered with rubbish and litter, when you looked up, it was as if heaven itself had been opened, and you looked into the courts of God and angels. Now, the scaffolding is kept around men long after the fresco is commenced to be painted; and wondrous disclosures will be made when God shall take down this scaffolding body, and reveal what you have been doing. By sorrow and by joy; by joys which are but bright colours, and by sorrows which are but shadows of bright colours; by prayer; by the influences of the sanctuary; by your pleasures; by your business; by reverses; by successes and by failures; by what strengthened your confidence, and by what broke it down; by the things that you rejoiced in, and by the things that you mourned over—by all that God is working in you. And you are to be perfected, not according to the things that you plan, but according to the divine pattern. Your portrait and mine are being painted, and God by wondrous strokes and influences is working us up to his own ideal. Over and above what you are doing for yourself, God is working to make you like him. And the wondrous declaration is, that when you stand before God, and see what has been done for you, you shall be “*satisfied.*” Oh, word that has been wandering solitary and without a habitation ever since the world began, and the morning stars sang together for joy! Has there ever been a human creature that could stand on earth while clothed in the flesh, and say, “*I am satisfied*”? What is the meaning of the word? Sufficiently filled; filled full; filled up in every part. And when God’s work is complete, we shall stand before him, and, with the bright ideal and glorified conception of heavenly aspiration upon us, looking up to God, and back on ourselves, we shall say, “*I am satisfied;*” for we shall be like him. Amen. Why should we not be satisfied?—*Henry Ward Beecher, in “Royal Truths,” 1862.*

Verse 15.—“*When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.*” He speaks here of the resurrection; he calls it an awaking, for you know death is called a sleep. “*Those that are asleep in the Lord shall rise first.*” He had spoken before of those that had put their happiness in the comforts of this life, suitable to their bodies, to the animal state of their bodies; that is clear by the fourteenth verse, “*Deliver me from the men that are thine hand, O Lord, who have their portion in this life, whose belly thou fillest with thy treasure: they are full of children, and leave to them outward things,*” bodily things. “*But as for me,*” said he, “*I will behold thy face in thy righteousness*” (there is the vision of God which is his happiness in his soul): “*and I shall be satisfied when I awake*” (when I rise again), “*with thine image.*” It is not the image of God only upon himself that he means here. Why? Because that doth not satisfy a holy heart, but it is that image of the invisible God which the human nature of Jesus Christ is, who, in opposition to all these outward pleasures, will be all in all to us; he is a spiritual creature, his human nature is spiritualised, made glorious, and our bodies shall be made spiritual likewise. “*The body is made for the Lord, and the Lord for the body,*” and this when they are both raised up; Christ is raised up already, and because he hath ordained the one to be serviceable to the other, he will also raise up our bodies; and when he doth raise me up, saith David, though other men have their

bellies full here, and have animal pleasures they delight in; yet when I shall awake at latter day, and shall see this image of thine, shall see thy Son, I shall be satisfied: "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thine image."—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 15.—"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." In this Psalm holy David's afflictions are neither few nor small; his *innocency* that is wounded by malicious slanderers, his *life* that is in jeopardy by deadly enemies that compass him about; his *present condition* that is embittered unto him by the pressing wants of a barren wilderness, while his foes live deliciously in Saul's court. And yet under the weight and combination of so many sore evils, David carries himself as one that is neither hopeless nor forsaken, yea, lays his estate in the balance against theirs, and in this low ebb of his, vies with them for happiness; and at last shutting up the Psalm with a triumphant *epiphonema*, concludes himself to be by far the better man. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." They, 'tis true, enjoy the face of their king, whose favour is as a cloud of latter rain promising a fruitful harvest of many blessings, "but I," saith he, "shall behold the face of God in righteousness," whose loving-kindness is better than life, clothed with all its royalties. They have their bellies filled with hidden treasure, having more than a common hand of bounty opened unto them; but I have more gladness put into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased. They have their portion in hand, and as being men of this world; but I have mine laid up in the other: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." In these words we have his and every believer's eternal happiness in the other life, set forth in three particulars as a most effectual antidote against present troubles and temptations that arise from the malice of wicked men against them.—*William Spurstow.*

Verse 15.—"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." The saints in heaven have not yet awaked in God's likeness. The bodies of the righteous still sleep, but they are to be satisfied on the resurrection morn, when they awake. When a Roman conqueror had been at war, and won great victories, he would return to Rome with his soldiers, enter privately into his house, and enjoy himself till the next day, when he would go out of the city to re-enter it publicly in triumph. Now, the saints, as it were, enter privately into heaven without their bodies; but on the last day, when their bodies wake up, they will enter into their triumphal chariots. Methinks I see that grand procession, when Jesus Christ first of all, with many crowns on his head, with his bright, glorious, immortal body, shall lead the way. Behind him come the saints, each of them clapping their hands, or pouring sweet melody from their golden harps; all entering in triumph. And when they come to heaven's gates, and the doors are opened wide to let the King of glory in, how will the angels crowd at the windows and on the housetops, like the inhabitants in the Roman triumphs, to watch the pompous procession, and scatter heaven's roses and lilies upon them, crying, "Hallelujah! hallelujah! hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." "I shall be satisfied" in that glorious day when all the angels of God shall come to see the triumphs of Jesus, and when his people shall be victorious with him.—*Spurgeon's Sermons.*

Verse 15.—"I shall be satisfied . . . with thy likeness." Let a man who is thirsty be brought to an ocean of pure water, and he has enough. If there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, then sure there is enough to satisfy us. The soul is but finite, but God is infinite. Though God be a good that satisfies, yet he does not surfeit. Fresh joys spring continually from his face; and he is as much to be desired after millions of years by glorified souls as at the first moment. There is a fulness in God that satisfies, and yet so much sweetness that the soul still desires. God is a *delicious* good. That which is the chief good must ravish the soul with pleasure; there must be in it rapturous delight and quintessence of joy. *In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima immo rapitur*: the love of God drops such infinite suavity into the soul as is unspeakable and full of glory. If there be so much delight in God, when we see him only by faith (1 Peter i. 8), what will the joy of vision be, when we shall see him face to face! If the saints have found so much delight in God while they were suffering, oh, what joy and delight will they have when they are being crowned! If flames are beds of roses, what will it be to lean on the bosom of Jesus! What a bed of roses that will be! God is a *superlative* good. He is better than anything you can put in competition with him; he is better than health, riches, honour. Other things maintain life, he gives life. Who would put anything in balance with the Deity? Who would weigh a feather against a mountain of

gold? God excels all other things more infinitely than the sun the light of a taper. God is an *eternal* good. He is the Ancient of days, yet never decays, nor waxes old. Daniel vii. 9. The joy he gives is eternal, the crown fadeth not away. 1 Peter v. 4. The glorified soul shall be ever solacing itself in God, feasting on his love, and sunning itself in the light of his countenance. We read of the river of pleasure at God's right hand; but will not this in time be dried up? No. There is a fountain at the bottom which feeds it. Psalm xxxvi. 9. "With the Lord is a fountain of life." Thus God is the chief good, and the enjoyment of God for ever is the highest felicity of which the soul is capable.—*Thomas Watson*.

Verse 15.—"When I awake," etc. The sincere Christian is progressive, never at his journey's end till he gets to heaven; this keeps him always in motion, advancing in his desires and endeavours forward: he is thankful for little grace, but not content with great measures of grace. "When I awake," saith David, "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness." He had many a sweet entertainment at the house of God in his ordinances. The Spirit of God was the messenger that brought him many a covered dish from God's table, inward consolations which the world knew not of. Yet David has not enough, it is heaven alone that can give him his full draught. They say the Gauls, when they first tasted of the wines of Italy, were so taken with their lusciousness and sweetness, that they could not be content to trade thither for this wine, but resolved they would conquer the land where they grew. Thus the sincere soul thinks it not enough to receive a little now and then of grace and comfort from heaven, by trading and holding commerce at a distance with God in his ordinances here below, but projects and meditates a conquest of that holy land and blessed place from which such rich commodities come, that he may drink the wine of that kingdom in that kingdom.—*William Gurnall*.

Verse 15.—"When I awake." How apt and obvious is the analogy between our awaking out of natural sleep, and the holy soul's rising up out of the darkness and torpor of its present state into the enlivening light of God's presence? It is truly said so to *awake* at its first quitting these darksome regions, when it lays aside its cumbersome night-veil. It doth so more perfectly in the joyful morning of the resurrection-day when mortality is swallowed up in life, and all the yet hovering shadows of it are vanished and fled away. And how known and usual an application this is of the metaphorical terms of sleeping and awaking in Holy Writ, I need not tell them who have read the Bible. Nor doth this interpretation less fitly accord to the other contents of this verse; for to what state do the sight of God's face, and satisfaction with his likeness, so fully agree, as to that of future blessedness in the other world? But then the contexture of discourse in this and the foregoing verse together, seems plainly to determine us to this sense: for what can be more conspicuous in them, than a purposed comparison, an opposition of two states of felicity mutually to each other? That of the wicked whom he calls *men of time* (as the words *אֲנָשֵׁי תְּמֵנָה* are rendered by Pagninus—*Homines de tempore*—and do literally signify) and whose portion, he tells us, is in this life: and the righteous man's, his own; which he expected not to be till he should awake, that is, not till after his life.—*John Howe*.

Verse 15.—There is a sleep of deadness of spirit, out of which the shining of God's loving countenance doth awake a believer and revive the spirit of the contrite ones; and there is a sleep of death bodily, out of which the lovingkindness of the Lord shall awake all his own in the day of the resurrection, when he shall so change them into the similitude of his own holiness and glorious felicity that they shall be fully contented for ever: and this first and second delivery out of all trouble may every believer expect and promise to himself. "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."—*David Dickson*.

Verse 15.—There is a threefold meaning in this verse, inasmuch as it is in Christ alone, the firstborn from the dead, the express image of Jehovah's glory, that the saints will rise immortal, incorruptible, and be like the angels in heaven. 1. They will greatly delight in the glorious state in which they will rise. 2. They will greatly delight in Jesus, in whom, and by whom, resurrection and immortality are brought to light; and 3. They will delight greatly in beholding the blessed and reconciled countenance of Jehovah, the Father, whom no eye of flesh can see. This is the difference between the appearance of God to Israel on Mount Sinai, and the happy state in which the saints will behold him in the resurrection. Glorious as the scene on Sinai was, yet the Lord said to Israel, "You have seen no *אֵלֹהִים* (*Temunah*),

no manner of similitude," or likeness, or countenance; but David speaks of the spiritual glory of the triumphant saints in the resurrection, when they shall see Jehovah as he is, and rejoice in his beatific presence for ever and ever.—*Benjamin Weiss, in loc, 1858.*

Verse 15.—Everlasting life and salvation in heaven, is not a truth revealed only by the gospel, but was well known, clearly revealed, and firmly believed, by the saints of old. They had assurance of this, that they should live with God for ever in glory. "When I awake, with thy likeness." Psalm xvii. 15. "Thou wilt receive me to glory." Psalm lxxiii. 24. "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm xvi. 11. They looked for another country, whereof Canaan was but a type and shadow, as the apostle shows in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xi. 16. They knew there was an eternal state of happiness for the saints, as well as an eternal state of misery for the wicked; they did believe this in those days.—*Samuel Mather on the "Types," 1705.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—The voice of Jesus—our Righteousness, and our own voice. Work out the thought of both coming up to the ear of heaven, noting the qualities of our prayer as indicated by the psalmist's language, such as earnestness, perseverance, sincerity, etc.

Verse 2.—"Let my sentence come forth from thy presence." I. When it will come. II. Who dare meet it now. III. How to be among them.

Verse 3.—"Thou hast proved mine heart." The metal, the furnace, the refiner, etc.

Verse 3.—"Thou hast visited me in the night." I. Glorious visitor. II. Favoured individual. III. Peculiar season. IV. Refreshing remembrance. V. Practical result.

Verse 3 (last sentence).—Transgressions of the lip, and how to avoid them.

Verse 4.—The highway and the by-paths. *The world and sin.* "The paths of the destroyer"—a significant name for transgression.

Verse 5.—"Hold up." I. Who? God. II. What? "My goings." III. When? Present tense. IV. Where? "In thy paths." V. Why? "That my footsteps slip not."

Verse 5.—Let me observe David and learn to pray as he prayed, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." I. See his *course*. He speaks of his "goings." Religion does not allow a man to sit still. He speaks of his goings "in God's paths." These are threefold. (1). The path of his *commands*. (2). The path of his *ordinances*. (3). The path of his *dispensations*. II. His concern respecting this course. It is the language of—(1) *conviction*; (2) *of apprehension*; (3) *of weakness*; (4) *of confidence*.—*William Jay.*

Verse 6.—Two words, both great, though little, "call" and "hear." Two persons, one little and the other great, "I," "Thee, O God." Two tenses: past, "I have;" future, "Thou wilt." Two wonders, that we do not call more, and that God hears such unworthy prayers.

Verse 7 (first sentence).—See Exposition. A view of divine lovingkindness desired.

Verse 7.—"O thou," etc. God, the Saviour of believers.

Verse 8.—Two most suggestive emblems of tenderness and care. Involving in the one case *living unity*, as the eye with the body, and in the other, *loving relationship*, as the bird and its young.

Verse 14.—"Men of the world, which have their portion in this life." Who they are? What they have? Where they have it? What next?

Verse 14.—"Men which are thy hand." Providential control and use of wicked men.

Verse 15.—This is the language (1) of a man whose mind is made up; who has decided for himself; who does not suspend his conduct upon the resolution of others. (2) Of a man rising in life, and with great prospects before him. (3) It is the language of a Jew.

Verse 15.—*The beholding of God's face* signifies two things. I. The enjoyment of his favour. II. Intimate communion with him.—*William Jay.*

Verse 15.—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 25. Title, "The Hope of Future Bliss." Divisions. I. The Spirit of this utterance. II. The matter of it. III. The contrast implied in it.

Verse 15.—To see God and to be like him, the believer's desire.—*J. Fawcett.*