

## PSALM XXV.

**TITLE.**—A Psalm of David. *David is pictured in this Psalm as in a faithful miniature. His holy trust, his many conflicts, his great transgressions, his bitter repentance, and his deep distresses are all here ; so that we see the very heart of " the man after God's own heart."* It is evidently a composition of David's later days, for he mentions the sins of his youth, and from its painful references to the craft and cruelty of his many foes, it will not be too speculative a theory to refer it to the period when Absalom was heading the great rebellion against him. This has been styled the second of the seven Penitential Psalms. It is the mark of a true saint that his sorrows remind him of his sins, and his sorrow for sin drives him to his God.

**SUBJECT AND DIVISION.**—The twenty-two verses of this Psalm begin in the original with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in their proper order. It is the first instance we have of an inspired acrostic or alphabetical song. This method may have been adopted by the writer to assist the memory ; and the Holy Spirit may have employed it to show us that the graces of style and the arts of poetry may lawfully be used in his service. Why should not all the wit and ingenuity of man be sanctified to noblest ends by being laid upon the altar of God ? From the singularity of the structure of the Psalm, it is not easy to discover any marked divisions ; there are great changes of thought, but there is no variation of subject ; the moods of the writer's mind are twofold—prayer and meditation ; and as these appear in turns, we shall thus divide the verses. Prayer from verses 1 to 7 ; meditation, verses 8, 9, 10 ; prayer, verse 11 ; meditation, verses 12—15 ; prayer, verses 16 to end.

### EXPOSITION.

**U**NTO thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, I trust in thee : let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed : let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD ; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me : for thou *art* the God of my salvation ; on thee do I wait all the day.

6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses ; for they *have been* ever of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions : according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

1. "*Unto thee, O Lord.*"—See how the holy soul flies to its God like a dove to its cote. When the storm-winds are out, the Lord's vessels put about and make for their well-remembered harbour of refuge. What a mercy that the Lord will condescend to hear our cries in time of trouble, although we may have almost forgotten him in our hours of fancied prosperity. "*Unto thee, O Jehovah, do I lift up my soul.*" It is but mockery to uplift the hands and the eyes unless we also bring our souls into our devotions. True prayer may be described as the soul rising from earth to have fellowship with heaven ; it is taking a journey upon Jacob's ladder, leaving our cares and fears at the foot, and meeting with a covenant God at the top. Very often the soul cannot rise, she has lost her wings, and is heavy and earth-bound ; more like a burrowing mole than a soaring eagle. At such dull seasons we must not give over prayer, but must, by God's assistance, exert all our power to lift up our hearts. Let faith be the lever and grace be the arm, and the dead lump will yet be stirred. But what a lift it has sometimes proved ! With all our tugging and straining we have been utterly defeated, until the heavenly loadstone of our Saviour's love has displayed its omnipotent attractions, and then our hearts have gone up to our Beloved like mounting flames of fire.

2. "*O my God.*" This title is more dear and near than the name Jehovah,

which is used in the first sentence. Already the sweet singer has drawn nearer to his heavenly helper, for he makes bold to grasp him with the hand of assured possession, calling him, my God. Oh the more than celestial music of that word—“*my God!*” It is to be observed that the Psalmist does not deny expression to those gracious feelings with which God had favoured him; he does not fall into loathsome mock modesty, but finding in his soul a desire to seek the Lord he avows it; believing that he had a rightful interest in Jehovah he declares it, and knowing that he had confidence in his God he professes it; “*O my God, I trust in thee.*” Faith is the cable which binds our boat to the shore, and by pulling at it we draw ourselves to the land; faith unites us to God, and then draws us near to him. As long as the anchor of faith holds there is no fear in the worst tempest; if that should fail us there would be no hope left. We must see to it that our faith is sound and strong, for otherwise prayer cannot prevail with God. Woe to the warrior who throws away his shield; what defence can be found for him who finds no defence in God? “*Let me not be ashamed*” Let not my disappointed hopes makes me feel ashamed of my former testimonies to thy faithfulness. Many were on the watch for this. The best of men have their enemies, and should pray against them that they may not see their wicked desires accomplished. “*Let not mine enemies triumph over me.*” Suffer no wicked mouth to make blasphemous mirth out of my distresses by asking “Where is thy God?” There is a great jealousy in believers for the honour of God, and they cannot endure that unbelievers should taunt them with the failure of their expectations from the God of their salvation. All other trusts will end in disappointment and eternal shame, but our confidences shall never be confounded.

3. “*Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.*” Suffering enlarges the heart by creating the power to sympathize. If we pray eagerly for ourselves, we shall not long be able to forget our fellow-sufferers. None pity the poor like those who have been or are still poor, none have such tenderness for the sick as those who have been long in ill health themselves. We ought to be grateful for occasional griefs if they preserve us from chronic hard-heartedness; for of all afflictions, an unkind heart is the worst, it is a plague to its possessor, and a torment to those around him. Prayer when it is of the Holy Ghost’s teaching is never selfish; the believer does not sue for monopolies for himself, but would have all in like case to partake of divine mercy with him. The prayer may be viewed as a promise; our Heavenly Father will never let his trustful children find him untrue or unkind. He will ever be mindful of his covenant. “*Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.*” David had given his enemies no provocation; their hatred was wanton. Sinners have no justifiable reason or valid excuse for transgressing; they benefit no one, not even themselves by their sins; the law against which they transgress is not harsh or unjust; God is not a tyrannical ruler, providence is not a bondage: men sin because they will sin, not because it is either profitable or reasonable to do so. Hence shame is their fitting reward. May they blush with penitential shame now, or else they will not be able to escape the everlasting contempt and the bitter shame which is the promotion of fools in the world to come.

4. “*Shew me thy ways, O Lord.*” Unsansctified natures clamour for their own way, but gracious spirits cry, “Not my will, but thine be done.” We cannot at all times discern the path of duty, and at such times it is our wisdom to apply to the Lord himself. Frequently the dealings of God with us are mysterious, and then also we may appeal to him as his own interpreter, and in due time he will make all things plain. Moral, providential and mental forms of guidance are all precious gifts of a gracious God to a teachable people. The second petition, “*teach me thy paths,*” appears to mean more than the first, and may be illustrated by the case of a little child who should say to his father, “Father, first tell me which is the way, and then teach my little trembling feet to walk in it.” What weak dependent creatures we are! How constantly we cry to the Strong for strength!

5. “*Lead me in thy truth, and teach me.*” The same request as in the last verse. The little child having begun to walk, asks to be still led onward by its parent’s helping hand, and to be further instructed in the alphabet of truth. Experimental teaching is the burden of this prayer. Lead me according to thy truth, and prove thyself faithful; lead me into truth that I may know its preciousness, lead me by the way of truth that I may manifest its spirit. David knew much, but he felt his ignorance and desired to be still in the Lord’s school; four times over in these two verses he applies for a scholarship in the college of grace. It were well for many professors

if instead of following their own devices, and cutting out new paths of thought for themselves, they would enquire for the good old ways of God's own truth, and beseech the Holy Ghost to give them sanctified understandings and teachable spirits. "*For thou art the God of my salvation.*" The Three-One Jehovah is the Author and Perfector of salvation to his people. Reader, is he the God of *your* salvation? Do you find in the Father's election, in the Son's atonement, and in the Spirit's quickening all the grounds of your eternal hopes? If so, you may use this as an argument for obtaining further blessings; if the Lord has ordained to save you, surely he will not refuse to instruct you in his ways. It is a happy thing when we can address the Lord with the confidence which David here manifests, it gives us great power in prayer, and comfort in trial. "*On thee do I wait all the day.*" Patience is the fair handmaid and daughter of faith; we cheerfully wait when we are certain that we shall not wait in vain. It is our duty and our privilege to wait upon the Lord in service, in worship, in expectancy, in trust all the days of our life. Our faith will be tried faith, and if it be of the true kind, it will bear continued trial without yielding. We shall not grow weary of waiting upon God if we remember how long and how graciously he once waited for us.

6. "*Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses.*" We are usually tempted in seasons of affliction to fear that our God has forgotten us, or forgotten his usual kindness towards us; hence the soul doth as it were put the Lord in remembrance, and beseech him to recollect those deeds of love which once he wrought towards it. There is a holy boldness which ventures thus to deal with the Most High, let us cultivate it; but there is also an unholy unbelief which suggests our fears, let us strive against it with all our might. What gems are those two expressions, "*tender mercies and loving-kindnesses*"! They are the virgin honey of language; for sweetness no words can excel them; but as for the gracious favours which are intended by them, language fails to describe them.

"When all thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I'm lost  
In wonder, love and praise."

If the Lord will only do unto us in the future as in the past, we shall be well content. We seek no change in the divine action, we only crave that the river of grace may never cease to flow.

"*For they have been ever of old.*" A more correct translation would be "from eternity." David was a sound believer in the doctrine of God's eternal love. The Lord's loving-kindnesses are no novelties. When we plead with him to bestow them upon us, we can urge use and custom of the most ancient kind. In courts of law men make much of precedents, and we may plead them at the throne of grace. "Faith," saith Dickson, "must make use of experiences and read them over unto God out of the register of a sanctified memory, as a recorder to him who cannot forget." With an unchangeable God it is a most effectual argument to remind him of his ancient mercies and his eternal love. By tracing all that we enjoy to the fountain-head of everlasting love we shall greatly cheer our hearts, and those do us but sorry service who try to dissuade us from meditating upon election and its kindred topics.

7 "*Remember not the sins of my youth.*" Sin is the stumbling-block. This is the thing to be removed. Lord, pass an act of oblivion for all my sins, and especially for the hot-blooded wanton follies of my younger years. Those offences which we remember with repentance God forgets, but if we forget them, justice will bring them forth to punishment. The world winks at the sins of young men, and yet they are not so little after all; the bones of our youthful feastings at Satan's table will stick painfully in our throats when we are old men. He who presumes upon his youth is poisoning his old age. How large a tear may wet this page as some of us reflect upon the past! "*Nor my transgressions.*" Another word for the same evils. Sincere penitents cannot get through their confessions at a gallop; they are constrained to use many bemoanings, for their swarming sins smite them with so innumerable griefs. A painful sense of any one sin provokes the believer to repentance for the whole mass of his iniquities. Nothing but the fullest and clearest pardon will satisfy a thoroughly awakened conscience. David would have his sins not only forgiven, but forgotten.

"*According to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.*" David

and the dying thief breathe the same prayer, and doubtless they grounded it upon the same plea, viz, the free grace and unmerited goodness of Jehovah. We dare not ask to have our portion measured from the balances of justice, but we pray to be dealt with by the hand of mercy.

8 Good and upright *is* the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

These three verses are a meditation upon the attributes and acts of the Lord. He who toils in the harvest field of prayer should occasionally pause awhile and refresh himself with a meal of meditation.

8. "*Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*" Here the goodness and the rectitude of the divine character are beheld in friendly union; he who would see them thus united in bonds of perfect amity must stand at the foot of the cross and view them blended in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. It is no less true than wonderful that through the atonement the justice of God pleads as strongly as his grace for the salvation of the sinners whom Jesus died to save. Moreover, as a good man naturally endeavours to make others like himself, so will the Lord our God in his compassion bring sinners into the way of holiness and conform them to his own image; thus the goodness of our God leads us to expect the reclaiming of sinful men. We may not conclude from God's goodness that he will save those sinners who continue to wander in their own ways, but we may be assured that he will renew transgressors' hearts and guide them into the way of holiness. Let those who desire to be delivered from sin take comfort from this. God himself will condescend to be the teacher of sinners. What a ragged school is this for God to teach in! God's teaching is practical; he teaches sinners not only the doctrine, but *the way*.

9. "*The meek will he guide in judgment.*" Meek spirits are in high favour with the Father of the meek and lowly Jesus, for he sees in them the image of his only-begotten Son. They know their need of guidance, and are willing to submit their own understandings to divine will, and therefore the Lord condescends to be their guide. Humble spirits are in this verse endowed with a rich inheritance; let them be of good cheer. Trouble puts gentle spirits to their wits' ends, and drives them to act without discretion, but grace comes to the rescue, enlightens their mind to follow that which is just, and helps them to discern the way in which the Lord would have them to go. Proud of their own wisdom fools will not learn, and therefore miss their road to heaven, but lowly hearts sit at Jesu's feet, and find the gate of glory, for "*the meek will he teach his way.*" Blessed teacher! Favoured scholar! Divine lesson! My soul, be thou familiar with the whole.

10. This is a rule without an exception. God is good to those that be good. Mercy and faithfulness shall abound towards those who through mercy are made faithful. Whatever outward appearances may threaten we should settle it steadfastly in our minds that while grace enables us to obey the Lord's will we need not fear that Providence will cause us any real loss. There shall be mercy in every unsavoury morsel, and faithfulness in every bitter drop; let not our hearts be troubled, but let us rest by faith in the immutable covenant of Jehovah, which is ordered in all things and sure. Yet this is not a general truth to be trampled upon by swine, it is a pearl for a child's neck. Gracious souls, by faith resting upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus, *keep the covenant* of the Lord, and, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, they walk in *his testimonies*; these will find all things co-working for their good, but to the sinner there is no such promise. Keepers of the covenant shall be kept by the covenant; those who follow the Lord's commands shall find the Lord's mercy following them.

11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it *is* great.

This sentence of prayer would seem out of place were it not that prayer is always in its place, whether in season or out of season. Meditation having refreshed the Psalmist, he falls to his weighty work again, and wrestles with God for the remission of

his sin. "For thy name's sake, O Lord." Here is a blessed, never-falling plea. Not for our sakes or our merits' sake, but to glorify thy mercy, and to show forth the glory of thy divine attributes. "Pardon mine iniquity." It is confessed, it is abhorred, it is consuming my heart with grief; Lord forgive it; let thine own lips pronounce my absolution. "For it is great." It weighs so heavily upon me that I pray thee remove it. Its greatness is no difficulty with thee, for thou art a great God, but the misery which it causes to me is my argument with thee for speedy pardon. Lord, the patient is sore sick, therefore, heal him. To pardon a great sinner will bring thee great glory, therefore for thy name's sake pardon me. Observe how this verse illustrates the logic of faith, which is clean contrary to that of a legal spirit; faith looks not for merit in the creature, but hath regard to the goodness of the Creator; and instead of being staggered by the demerits of sin it looks to the precious blood, and pleads all the more vigorously because of the urgency of the case.

12 What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

14 The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

15 Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

12. "What man is he that feareth the Lord?" Let the question provoke self-examination. Gospel privileges are not for every pretender. Art thou of the seed royal or no? "Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose." Those whose hearts are right shall not err for want of heavenly direction. Where God sanctifies the heart he enlightens the head. We all wish to choose our way; but what a mercy is it when the Lord directs that choice, and makes free-will to be good-will! If we make our will God's will, God will let us have our will. God does not violate our will, but leaves much to our choice; nevertheless, he instructs our wills, and so we choose that which is well-pleasing in his sight. The will should be subject to law; there is a way which we should choose, but so ignorant are we that we need to be taught, and so wilful that none but God himself can teach us effectually.

13. He who fears God has nothing else to fear. "His soul shall dwell at ease." He shall lodge in the chamber of content. One may sleep as soundly in the little bed in the corner as in the Great Bed of Ware; it is not abundance but content that gives true ease. Even here, having learned by grace both to abound and to be empty, the believer dwells at ease; but how profound will be the ease of his soul for ever! There he will enjoy the "*otium cum dignitate*;" ease and glory shall go together. Like a warrior whose battles are over, or a husbandman whose barns are full, his soul shall take its ease, and be merry for ever. "His seed shall inherit the earth." God remembers, Isaac for the sake of Abraham, and Jacob for the sake of Isaac. Good men's sons have a goodly portion to begin the world with, but many of them, alas! turn a father's blessing into a curse. The promise is not broken because in some instances men wilfully refuse to receive it; moreover, it is in its spiritual meaning that it now holds good; our spiritual seed do inherit all that was meant by "*the earth*," or Canaan; they receive the blessing of the new covenant. May the Lord make us the joyful parents of many spiritual children, and we shall have no fears about their maintenance, for the Lord will make each one of them princes in all the earth.

14. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Some read it "the friendship:" It signifies familiar intercourse, confidential intimacy, and select fellowship. This is a great secret. Carnal minds cannot guess what is intended by it, and even believers cannot explain it in words, for it must be felt to be known. The higher spiritual life is necessarily a path which the eagle's eye hath not known, and which the lion's whelp has not travelled; neither natural wisdom nor strength can force a door into this inner chamber. Saints have the key of heaven's hieroglyphics; they can unriddle celestial enigmas. They are initiated into the fellowship of the skies; they have heard words which it is not possible for them to repeat to their fellows. "And he will shew them his covenant." Its antiquity, security, righteousness, fulness, graciousness and excellence shall be revealed to their hearts

and understandings, and above all, their own part in it shall be sealed to their souls by the witness of the Holy Spirit. The designs of love which the Lord has to his people in the covenant of grace, he has been pleased to show to believers in the Book of Inspiration, and by his Spirit he leads us into the mystery, even the hidden mystery of redemption. He who does not know the meaning of this verse, will never learn it from a commentary ; let him look to the cross for the secret lies there.

15. "*Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord.*" The writer claims to be fixed in his trust, and constant in his expectation ; he looks in confidence and waits in hope. We may add to this look of faith and hope the obedient look of service, the humble look of reverence, the admiring look of wonder, the studious look of meditation and the tender look of affection. Happy are those whose eyes are never removed from their God. "The eye," says Solomon, "is never satisfied with seeing," but this sight is the most satisfying in the world. "*For he shall pluck my feet out of the net.*" Observe the conflicting condition in which a gracious soul may be placed, his eyes are in heaven and yet his feet are sometimes in a net ; his nobler nature ceases not to behold the glories of God, while his baser parts are enduring the miseries of the world. A net is the common metaphor for temptation. The Lord often keeps his people from falling into it, and if they have fallen he rescues them. The word "*pluck*" is a rough word, and saints who have fallen into sin find that the means of their restoration are not always easy to the flesh ; the Lord plucks at us sharply to let us feel that sin is an exceeding bitter thing. But what a mercy is here ! Believer, be very grateful for it. The Lord will deliver us from the cunning devices of our cruel enemy, and even if through infirmity we have fallen into sin, he will not leave us to be utterly destroyed but will pluck us out of our dangerous state ; though our feet are in the net, if our eyes are up unto God, mercy certainly will interpose.

16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me ; for I *am* desolate and afflicted.

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged : O bring thou me out of my distresses.

18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain ; and forgive all my sins.

19 Consider mine enemies ; for they are many ; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

20 O keep my soul, and deliver me : let me not be ashamed ; for I put my trust in thee.

21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me ; for I wait on thee.

22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

16. His own eyes were fixed upon God, but he feared that the Lord had averted his face from him in anger. Oftentimes unbelief suggests that God has turned his back upon us. If we know that we turn to God we need not fear that he will turn from us, but may boldly cry, "*Turn thee unto me.*" The ground of quarrel is always in ourselves, and when that is removed there is nothing to prevent our full enjoyment of communion with God. "*Have mercy upon me.*" Saints still must stand upon the footing of mercy ; notwithstanding all their experience they cannot get beyond the publican's prayer, "*Have mercy upon me.*" "*For I am desolate and afflicted.*" He was lonely and bowed down. Jesus was in the days of his flesh in just such a condition ; none could enter into the secret depths of his sorrows, he trod the winepress alone, and hence he is able to succour in the fullest sense those who tread the solitary path.

"Christ leads me through no darker rooms  
Than he went through before ;  
He that into God's kingdom comes,  
Must enter by this door."

17. "*The troubles of my heart are enlarged.*" When trouble penetrates the heart it is trouble indeed. In the case before us, the heart was swollen with grief like a lake surcharged with water by enormous floods ; this is used as an argument for deliverance, and it is a potent one. When the darkest hour of the night arrives we may expect the dawn ; when the sea is at its lowest ebb the tide must surely turn ; and when our troubles are enlarged to the greatest degree, then may we hopefully pray, "*O bring thou me out of my distresses.*"

18. "*Look upon mine affliction and my pain.*" Note the many trials of the saints ; here we have no less than six words all descriptive of woe. "Desolate, and afflicted, troubles enlarged, distresses, affliction, and pain." But note yet more the submissive and believing spirit of a true saint ; all he asks for is, "Lord, look upon my evil plight ;" he does not dictate or even express a complaint ; a look from God will content him, and that being granted he asks no more. Even more noteworthy is the way in which the believer under affliction discovers the true source of all the mischief, and lays the axe at the root of it. "*Forgive all my sins,*" is the cry of a soul that is more sick of sin than of pain, and would sooner be forgiven than healed. Blessed is the man to whom sin is more unbearable than disease, he shall not be long before the Lord shall both forgive his iniquity and heal his diseases. Men are slow to see the intimate connection between sin and sorrow, a grace-taught heart alone feels it.

19. "*Consider mine enemies.*" Watch them, weigh them, check them, defeat them. "*For they are many.*" They need the eyes of Argus to watch them, and the arms of Hercules to match them, but the Lord is more than sufficient to defeat them. The devils of hell and the evils of earth are all vanquished when the Lord makes bare his arm. "*They hate me with cruel hatred.*" It is the breath of the serpent's seed to hate ; their progenitor was a hater, and they themselves must needs imitate him. No hate so cruel as that which is unreasonable and unjust. A man can forgive one who has injured him, but one whom he has injured he hates implacably. "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," is still our Master's word to us.

20. "*O keep my soul*" out of evil, "*and deliver me*" when I fall into it. This is another version of the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

"*Let me not be ashamed.*" This is the one fear which like a ghost haunted the Psalmist's mind. He trembled lest his faith should become the subject of ridicule through the extremity of his affliction. Noble hearts can brook anything but shame. David was of such a chivalrous spirit, that he could endure any torment rather than to be put to dishonour. "*For I put my trust in thee.*" And therefore the name of God would be compromised if his servants were deserted ; this the believing heart can by no means endure.

21. "*Let integrity and uprightness preserve me.*" What better practical safeguards can a man require ? If we do not prosper with these as our guides, it is better for us to suffer adversity. Even the ungodly world admits that "honesty is the best policy." The heir of heaven makes assurance doubly sure, for apart from the rectitude of his public life, he enlists the guardian care of heaven in secret prayer : "*for I wait on thee.*" To pretend to wait on God without holiness of life is religious hypocrisy, and to trust to our own integrity without calling upon God is presumptuous atheism. Perhaps the integrity and uprightness referred to are those righteous attributes of God, which faith rests upon as a guarantee that the Lord will not forfeit his word.

22. "*Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*" This is a very comprehensive prayer, including all the faithful and all their trials. Sorrow had taught the Psalmist sympathy, and given him communion with the tried people of God ; he therefore remembers them in his prayers. *Israel*, the tried, the wrestling, the conquering hero, fit representative of all the saints. *Israel* in Egypt, in the wilderness, in wars with Canaanites, in captivity, fit type of the church militant on earth. Jesus is the Redeemer from trouble as well as sin, he is a complete Redeemer, and from every evil he will rescue every saint. Redemption by blood is finished : O God, send us redemption by power. Amen and Amen.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Whole Psalm*—This is the first of the seven alphabetical Psalms, the others being the 34th, 37th, 111th, 112th, 119th, and 145th. They are specimens of that acrostic mode of writing which seems to have been once so fashionable among the Jews, as is testified by numerous instances of such composition, which are to be

met with in their works. Other poetic artifices were likewise adopted. We find many instances of poems being so constructed, that a prayer name, or some particular sentiment, would be not unfrequently expressed by the initial letters of the verses. See Bartolucci's "Bibliotheca Rabbinica," vol. ii. p. 260, where examples of such artifices are cited.—George Phillips, B.D., in "The Psalms in Hebrew with a Commentary," 1846.

*Whole Psalm.*—This is the first fully alphabetic Psalm . . . . The only lesson which the use of the alphabetic form may teach is this:—that the Holy Spirit was willing to throw his words into all the moulds of human thought and speech; and whatever ingenuity man may exhibit in intellectual efforts, he should consecrate these to his Lord, making him the "Alpha and Omega" of his pursuits.—Andrew A. Bonar.

*Whole Psalm.*—Saving grace is a secret that no man knows but the elect and the elect cannot know it neither without special illumination:—1. Special showing—"Shew me thy ways, O Lord," saith David. 2. Barely showing will not serve the turn, but there must be a special teaching—"Teach me thy paths," ver. 4. 3. Bare teaching will not avail neither, but there must be a special inculcative teaching—"Teach me in thy ways," to ver. 8. 4. Inculcative teaching will not do the deed neither, but there must be a special directive teaching—"Guide in judgment and teach," ver. 9. 5. Directive teaching will not be sufficient neither, but there must be a special manu-ductive teaching—"Lead me forth in thy truth, and teach me," ver. 5. 6. Manu-ductive teaching will not be effectual, but there must ye also a special, choice teaching, a determination of the very will, an elective teaching—"Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose," verse 12. And what secret is this? not common grace, for that is not the secret of the elect, but special and peculiar. grace. 1. The special grace of prayer—"Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul," verse 1. 2. A special grace of faith—"My God, I trust in thee," ver. 2. 3. A special grace of repentance—"Remember not the sins of my youth," etc., verse 7. 4. A special grace of hope—"My hope is in thee," verse 21. 5. A special grace of continual living in God's sight, and dependence upon God—"Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord," verse 15. 6. Which is the root of all God's special and eternal favour and mercy—"Remember, O Lord thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old," verse 6; even God's special mercy to him in particular, verse 11.—William Fenner, in "Hidden Manna," 1626.

*Whole Psalm.*—In these four Psalms which immediately follow one another we may find the soul of David presented in all the several postures of piety—*lying, standing, sitting, kneeling*. In the twenty-second Psalm, he is lying all along, falling flat on his face, low grovelling on the ground, even almost entering into a degree of despair. Speaking of himself in the history of Christ in the mystery, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In the twenty-third Psalm, he is *standing*, and through God's favour, in despite of his foes, trampling and triumphing over all opposition; "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore shall I lack nothing." In the twenty-fourth Psalm he is *sitting*, like a doctor in his chair, or a professor in his place, reading a lecture of divinity, and describing the character of that man—how he must be accomplished—"who shall ascend into the holy hill," and hereafter be partaker of happiness. In this twenty-fifth Psalm, he is *kneeling*, with hands and voice lifted up to God, and on these two hinges the whole Psalm turneth; the one is a hearty beseeching of God's mercy, the other a humble bemoaning of his own misery.—Thomas Fuller.

Verse 1.—"Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." *The lifting up of the heart* presupposeth a former dejection of his soul. The soul of man is pressed down with sin and with the cares of this world, which, as lead doth the net, draweth it so down, that it cannot mount above till God send spiritual prayers, as cork to the net, to exalt it; which arise out of faith, as the flame doth out of the fire, and which must be free of secular cares, and all things pressing down, which showeth unto us that worldlings can no more pray than a mole is able to fly. But Christians are as eagles which mount upward. Seeing then the heart of man by nature is fixed to the earth, and of itself is no more able to rise therefrom than a stone which is fixed in the ground, till God raises it by his power, word, and workmen; it should be our principal petition to the Lord, that it would please him to draw us, that we might run after him; that he would exalt and lift up our hearts to heaven, that they may not lie still in the puddle of this earth.—Archibald Symson.

Verse 1.—"Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." A godly man prays as a



boulder builds. Now a boulder first layeth a foundation, and because he cannot finish in one day, he comes the second day, and finds the frame standing that he made the first day, and then he adds a second day's work ; and then he comes a third day and finds his two former days' work standing ; then he proceeds to a third day's work, and makes walls to it, and so he goes on till his building be finished. So prayer is the building of the soul till it reach up to heaven ; therefore a godly heart prays, and reacheth higher and higher in prayer, till at last his prayers reach up to God.—*William Fenner*.

Verse 1.—“*Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul :*” unto thee in the fulness of thy merits, unto thee in the riches of thy grace ; unto thee in the embraces of thy love and comforts of thy Spirit ; unto thee, that thy thorns may be my crown, thy blood my balsam, thy curse my blessing, thy death my life, thy cross my triumph. Thus is my “*life hid with Christ in God ;*” and if so, then where should be my soul, but where is my life ? And, therefore, “*unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*” . . . . O make good thy name of Lord unto me ; as Lord, rebuke Satan and restrain all earthly and carnal affections, that they do not once dare to whisper a temptation to my soul, a distraction to my thoughts, whilst I am in communion with thee, in prayer at thy holy ordinance. Do thou as Lord, rule me by thy grace, govern me by thy Spirit, defend me by thy power, and crown me with thy salvation. Thou Lord, the preserver of heaven and earth, “*thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*” Psalm cxlv. 16. O open now thine hand, thy bosom, thy bounty, thy love, and satisfy the desires of my longing soul, which I here “*lift up unto thee.*”—*Robert Mossom*, 1657.

Verse 1.—“*Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*” Cyprian saith, that in the primitive times the minister was wont to prepare the people's minds to pray, by prefacing, *Sursum corda*, lift up your hearts. The Jews at this day write upon the walls of their synagogues these words, *Tephillah belo cavannah ceguph belo neshamah* ; that is, A prayer without the intention of the affection is like a body without a soul. And yet their devotion is a mere outside, saith one—a brainless head and a soulless body : “*This people draweth nigh to me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*” Isaiah xxix. 13. A carnal man can as little *lift up his heart* in prayer, as a mole can fly. A David finds it a hard task ; since the best heart is lumpish, and naturally beareth downwards, as the poise of a clock, as the lead of a net. Let us therefore “*lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us ;*” and pray to God to draw us up to himself, as the loadstone doth the iron. *John Trapp*.

Verse 1.—“*Unto thee I lift up my soul.*” This follows by a natural consequence after the sublime appeal in the foregoing Psalm to the gates of heaven to *lift up* their heads to receive Christ, the Lord of hosts and the King of glory, ascending into heaven. As the Collect for Ascension-day expresses it, “*Grant, O Lord, that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend ;*” and for the Sunday after Ascension, “*O God, who hast exalted thine only Son with great triumph to thy kingdom in heaven, send thy Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us to the same place, whither our Saviour Christ is gone before.*”—*Christopher Wordsworth*, in *loc*.

Verse 1.—“*I lift up my soul*, alluding to the sacrifices, which were wont to be *lifted up*. Hence prayers not answered, not accepted, are said to be stopped from ascending. Lam. iii. 44. When you met with such expressions in the Old Testament concerning prayer, you must still understand them to be allusions to the sacrifices, because the sacrifices were *lifted up* and did ascend.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 1.—“*My soul*. But how shall I call it mine, seeing it is thine, thine by purchase, thine having bought it with thy blood ? Yea, is it not thy spouse whom thou hast wedded to thyself by thy Spirit through faith ? And is not this holy sacrament the marriage feast ? If so, sure then, my Jesus, I was lost in myself, till found in thee ; and therefore my soul is now, and not till now, truly mine, in being wholly thine ; so that I can say with confidence, “*I lift up my soul unto thee.*” *Robert Mossom*.

Verse 2, 3.—When David had prayed, “*O my God, I trust in thee ; let me not be ashamed !*” In the next verse, as if conscious to himself that his prayers were too restrictive, narrow, and niggardly, he enlargeth the bounds thereof, and builds them on a broader bottom, “*Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.*” Thus it is that charity in the midst of our religious devotions must have *rehoboth* (room enough to

expatiate in). Our petitions must not be pent or confined to our own private good, but extended to the benefit of all God's servants, in what condition soever.—*Thomas Fuller*.

Verse 3.—“*Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.*” To wit, neither by their own disappointments, nor mine. For this last some add, because if he should fail of his hopes, he knew this would be a great discouragement of others.—*Arthur Jackson, M.A., 1593—1666.*

Verse 3.—“*Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.*” All persons who transgress, do it, in some sense, without cause; since they cannot excuse or justify their conduct. God is so amiable and excellent in every part of his great name, that he deserves our constant reverence and love. His law is so holy, just, and good, and all his precepts concerning all things so righteous and calculated to make us happy, that the mouth of every transgressor must be stopped. Hence we all must be covered with shame, if dealt with according to our deserts, for all have sinned. But since God has promised to be merciful to those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel, shame will be the portion of those only who willfully persist in their wickedness, and refuse to return to God by Jesus Christ. These then are the persons whom the Psalmist speaks of as transgressing without cause, and doubtless these have no cloak for their sin.—*William Richardson, 1825.*

Verse 3.—“*Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.*” Let shame be sent to the right owner, even to those that deal disloyally, unprovoked on my part. And so it was; for Achitophel hanged himself Absalom was trussed up by the hand of God, and dispatched by Joab; the people that conspired with him, partly perished by the sword, and partly fled home, much ashamed of their enterprise. Oh, the power of prayer! what may not the saints have for asking?—*John Trapp.*

Verse 4.—“*Shew me thy ways, O Lord,*” etc. There are the “ways” of men, and the “ways” of God; the “paths” of sin, and the “paths” of righteousness: there are “thy ways,” and there are my ways; *thine* the ways of truth, *mine* the ways of error; *thine* which are good in thine eyes, and *mine* which are good in mine eyes; *thine* which lead to heaven, *mine* which lead to hell. Wherefore, “*Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths,*” lest I mistake mine own ways for thine; yea, lead me in the truth, and teach me, lest I turn out of thy ways into mine own: “*shew me thy ways,*” by the ministry of thy word; “*teach me thy paths,*” in the guidance of thy Spirit, “*lead me in thy truth,*” by the assistance of thy grace.—*Robert Mossom.*

Verses 4, 5, 9.—Do what you know, and God will teach you what to do. Do what you know to be your *present* duty, and God will acquaint you with your *future* duty as it comes to be *present*. Make it your business to avoid *known omissions*, and God will keep you from feared commissions. This rule is of great moment, and therefore I will charge it upon you by express Scripture. “*Shew me thy ways, O Lord,*” *i.e.*, those way wherein I cannot err. “*Teach me thy paths,*” *i.e.*, that narrow path which is too commonly unknown, those commands that are most strict and difficult, verse 5. “*Lead me in thy truth, and teach me,*” *i.e.*, teach me evidently, that I may not be deceived; so teach me, that I may not only know thy will, but do it. Here's his prayer, but what grounds hath he to expect audience? “*For thou art the God of my salvation,*” *q.d.*, thou Lord, wilt save me, and therefore do not refuse to teach me. “*On thee do I wait all the day,*” *i.e.*, the whole day, and every day. Other arguments are couched in the following verses, but what answer? verse 9, “*The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way,*” *i.e.*, those that submit their neck to his yoke, those that are not conceited that they can guide themselves; in necessary, great, and weighty matters they shall not err.—*Samuel Annesley, D.D., (1620—1696), in “Morning Exercises at Cripplegate.”*

Verse 5.—“*Lead me in thy truth, and teach me.*” The soul that is unsatiable in prayer, he proceeds, he gets near to God, he gains something, he winds up his heart higher. As a child that seeth the mother have an apple in her hand, and it would fain have it, it will come and pull at the mother's hand for it: now she lets go one finger, and yet she holds it, and then he pulls again; and then she lets go another finger, and yet she keeps it, and then the child pulls again, and will never leave pulling and crying till it hath got it from its mother. So a child of God, seeing all graces to be in God, he draws near to the throne of grace begging for it, and by his earnest

and faithful prayers he opens the hands of God to him ; God dealing as parents to their children, holds them off for awhile ; not that he is unwilling to give, but to make them more earnest with God, to draw them the nearer to himself.—*William Fenner.*

*Verse 5.*—“*On thee do I wait all the day.*” We must “*wait all the day.*” 1. Though it be a *long* day, though we be kept waiting a great while, quite beyond our own reckoning ; though when we have waited long, we are still put to wait longer, and are bid, with the prophet’s servant, to go yet seven times (1 Kings xviii. 43), before we perceive the least sign of mercy coming . . . . . 2. Though it be a *dark* day, yet let us wait upon God “*all the day.*” Though while we are kept waiting for what God will do, we are kept in the dark concerning what he is doing, and what is best for us to do, yet let us be content to wait in the dark. Though we see not our signs, though there is none to tell us how long, yet let us resolve to wait, how long soever it may be ; for though what God doth we know not now, yet we shall know hereafter when the mystery of God shall be finished . . . . . 3. Though it be a *stormy* day, yet we must wait upon God “*all the day.*” Though we are not only becalmed, and do not get forward, but though the wind be contrary, and drive us back ; nay, though it be boisterous, and the church be tossed with tempests, and ready to sink, yet we must hope the best, yet we must wait, and weather the storm by patience. It is some comfort that Christ is in the ship ; the church’s cause is Christ’s own cause, he has espoused it, and he will own it ; he is embarked in the same bottom with his people, and therefore why are you fearful ? . . . . *To wait on God,* is—1. To live a life of desire towards God ; to wait on him as the beggar waits on his benefactor, with earnest desires to receive supplies from him, as the sick and sore at Bethesda’s pool waited for the stirring of the water, and attended in the porches with desire to be helped in and healed. . . . . 2. It is to live a life of delight in God, as the lover waits on his beloved. Desire is love in motion, as a bird upon the wing ; delight is love at rest, as a bird upon the rest ; now, though our desire must still be so towards God, as that we must be wishing for more of God, yet our delight must be so in God, as that we must never wish for more than God. . . . . 3. It is to live a life of dependence on God, as the child waits on his father, whom he has confidence in, and on whom he casts all his care. To wait on God is to expect all good to come to us from him, as the worker of all good for us and in us, the giver of all good to us, and the protector of us from all evil. Thus David explains himself (Psalm lxii. 5), “*My soul, wait thou only upon God,*” and continue still to do so, for “*my expectation is from him.*” . . . . 4. It is to live a life of devotedness to God, as the servant waits on his master, ready to observe his will, and to do his work, and in everything to consult his honour and interest. To wait on God is entirely and unreservedly to refer ourselves to his wise and holy directions and disposals, and cheerfully to acquiesce in them, and comply with them. The servant that waits on his master, chooseth not his own way, but follows his master step by step. Thus must we wait on God, as those that have no will of our own but what is wholly resolved into his, and must therefore study to accommodate ourselves to his.—*Condensed from Matthew Henry, on “Communion with God.”*

*Verse 5.*—“*On thee do I wait all the day.*” “*On thee,*” whose hand of bounty, whose bosom of love, yea, whose bowels of mercy are not only opened, but enlarged to all humble penitents. “*On thee do I wait,*” wait to hear the secret voice of thy Spirit, speaking peace unto my conscience, wait to feel the reviving vigour of thy grace, quickening mine obedience ; wait to see the subduing power of thy Holy Spirit quelling my rebellious sin ; wait to feel the cheering virtue of thy heavenly comforts, refreshing my fainting soul ; for all these thy blessings, “*O thou God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day.*” “*All the day :*” being never satisfied with thy goodness, as not more eagerly to long after thy heavenly fullness ; wherefore now refresh my faintings, quench not my desires ; but the more freely thou givest, let me the more eagerly covet ; the more sweet is thy mercy, let be the more eager my longings, that so my whole life on earth may be a continual breathing after that eternal fellowship and communion with thee in heaven ; thus, thus, *let me wait,* even all my life, *all the day.*—*Robert Mossom.*

*Verse 6.*—“*Thy tender mercies.*” Oh, how does one deep call upon another ! The depth of my multiplied miseries, calls, loudly calls, upon the depth of thy manifold mercies ; even that mercy whereby thou dost pardon my sin and help mine infirmities ; that mercy whereby thou dost sanctify me by thy grace, and comfort me

by thy Spirit; *that mercy* whereby thou dost deliver me from hell, and possess me of heaven. "*Remember, O Lord,*" all those thy mercies, *thy tender mercies*, which have been "*of old*" unto thy saints.—*Robert Mossom.*

Verse 6.—"*Thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses . . . have been ever of old.*" Let the ancientness of divine love draw up our hearts to a very dear and honourable esteem of it. Pieces of antiquity, though of base metal, and otherwise of little use or value, how venerable are they with learned men! and ancient charters, how careful are men to preserve them; although they contain but temporary privileges, and sometimes but of trivial moment! How then should the great charter of heaven, so much older than the world, be had in everlasting remembrance, and the thoughts thereof be very precious to us; lying down, rising up, and all the day long accompanying of us! . . . That which is from everlasting shall be to everlasting; if the root be eternal, so are the branches. . . . Divine love is an eternal fountain that never leaves running while a vessel is empty or capable of holding more; and it stands open to all comers: therefore, come; and if ye have not sufficient of your own, go and borrow vessels, empty vessels, not a few; "pay your debts out of it, and live on the rest" (2 Kings iv. 7), to eternity.—*Elisha Coles* on "*God's Sovereignty,*" 1678.

Verse 7.—"*Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.*" In the first place, considering that he had not begun only of late to commit sin, but that he had for a long time heaped up sin upon sin, he bows himself, if we may so speak, under the accumulated load; and, in the second place, he intimates, that if God should deal with him according to the rigour of the law, not only the sins of yesterday, or of a few days, would come into judgment against him, but all the instances in which he had offended, even from his infancy, might now with justice be laid to his charge. As often, therefore, as God terrifies us by his judgments and the tokens of his wrath, let us call to our remembrance, not only the sins which we have lately committed, but also all the transgressions of our past life, proving to us the ground of renewed shame and renewed lamentation.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 7.—"*Remember not the sins of my youth.*" This may seem but a superfluous prayer of David; for whereas in charity it may and must be presumed that David long since had begged pardon for his youthful sins, that upon his begging God had granted it, that upon his granting God never revoked it. What need now had David to prefer this petition for pardon of antiquated sin, time out of mind committed by him, time out of mind remitted by God? To this objection I shape a fourfold answer. *First*, though David no doubt long since had been truly sorrowful for his youthful sins, yet he was sensible in himself, that if God would be extreme to mark what was done amiss, though he had repented of those sins, yet he had sinned in that his repentance. *Secondly*, though God had forgiven David's sins so far forth as to pardon him eternal damnation, yet he had not remitted unto him temporal afflictions which perchance pressing upon him at this present, he prayeth in this Psalm for the removing or mitigating of them. So then the sense of his words sounds thus, "*Remember not, Lord, the sins of my youth,*" that is, Lord, lighten and lessen the afflictions which lie upon me in this mine old age, justly inflicted on me for my youthful sins. *Thirdly*, God's pardon for sins past, is ever granted with this condition, that the party so pardoned is bound to his good behaviour for the time to come, which if he breaks, he deserves in the strictness of justice to forfeit the benefit of his pardon. Now David was guilty afterward in that grand transgression of Bathsheba and Uriah, which might in the extremity of justice have made all his youthful sins to be punished afresh upon him. *Lastly*, grant David certainly assured of the pardon of his youthful sins, yet God's servants may pray for those blessings they have in possession, not for the obtaining of that they have—that is needless—but for the keeping of what they have obtained, that is necessary. Yea, God is well pleased with such prayers of his saints, and interprets them to be praises unto him, and then these words, "*Remember not the sins of my youth,*" amount to this effect: blessed be thy gracious goodness, who hast forgiven me the sins of my youth.—*Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 7.—"*Remember not the sins of my youth.*" David, after he was called by the power of the word, cries out, "*Lord, remember not,*" etc.; that gravelled and galled his conscience, the *sins* of his *youth* before his call. O beloved, the sins of your youth, though you should be Jobs converted, yet they will bring great disquietness and great horror when you come to age. The lusts of youth, and the

vanities of youth, and the sensual pleasures of your youthful days, they will lay a foundation of sorrow when you come to grey hairs to be near your graves. So Job. xx. 11.—*Christopher Love*, 1654.

Verse 7.—“Remember not the sins of my youth;” let them not move thee to punish or be avenged on me for them; as men, when they remember injuries, seek to be avenged on those who have done them.—*William Greenhill*.

Verse 7.—“Remember not the sins of my youth.” It is not safe to be at odds with the “Ancient of days.”—*John Trapp*.

Verse 7.—“The sins of my youth.” Before we come to the principal point we must first clear the text from the incumbrance of a double objection. The first is this:—It may seem (may some say) very improbable that David should have any sins of his youth, if we consider the principals whereupon his youth was past. The first was *poverty*. We read that his father Jesse passed for an *old* man, we read not that he passed for a *rich* man; and probably his seven sons were the principal part of his wealth. Secondly, *painfulness*. David, though the youngest, was not made a darling, but a drudge; sent by his father to follow the ewes big with young; where he may seem to have learned innocence and simplicity from the sheep he kept. Thirdly, *piety* (Psalm lxxi. 5), “For thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth.” And again in the seventeenth verse of the same Psalm, “O God, thou hast taught me from my youth:” David began to be good betimes, a *young saint*, and yet crossed that pestilent proverb, was no *old devil*. And what is more still, he was constantly in the furnace of affliction. Psalm lxxxviii. 15. “Even from my youth up, thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind.” The question then will be this, How could that water be corrupted which was daily clarified? How could that steel gather rust which was daily filed? How could David’s soul in his *youth* be sooty with sin, which was constantly scoured with suffering? But the answer is easy; for though David for the main were a man after God’s own heart (the best transcript of the best copy), yet he, especially in his youth, had his faults and infirmities, yea, his sins and transgressions. Though the Scripture maketh mention of no eminent sin in his youth, the business with Bathsheba being justly to be referred to David’s reduced and elder age. I will not conclude that David was of a wanton constitution because of a redde complexion. It is as injurious an inference to conclude all bad which are beautiful, as it is a false and flattering consequence to say all are honest who are deformed. Rather we may collect David’s youth guilty of wantonness from his having so many wives and concubines. But what go I about to do? Expect not that I should tell you the particular sins, when he could not tell his own. Psalm xix. “Who can tell how oft he offendeth?” Or how can David’s sins be known to me, which he confesseth were unknown to himself, which made him say, “O Lord, cleanse me from secret sins?” But to silence our curiosity, that our conscience may speak:—If David’s youth, which was poor, painful, and pious, was guilty of sins, what shall we say, of such whose education hath been wealthy, wanton, and wicked? And I report the rest to be acted with shame, sorrow, and silence in every man’s conscience.—*Thomas Fuller*.

Verse 7.—“The sins of my youth.” Two aged disciples, one eighty-seven years old, one day met. “Well,” enquired the younger of his fellow pilgrim, “how long have you been interested in religion?” “Fifty years,” was the old man’s reply. “Well, have you ever regretted that you began when young to devote yourself to religion?” “Oh, no!” said he, and the tears trickled down his furrowed cheeks; “I weep when I think of the sins of my youth; it is this which makes me weep now.”—From *K. Arvine’s “Cyclopædia of Moral and Religious Anecdotes,”* 1859.

Verse 7.—“According to thy mercy,” not mine; for I have forsaken those mercies thou madest mine own (Jonah ii. 8; Psalm lix. 10, 17), in being cruel to myself by my sin, through distrust of thy promise, and upon presumption in thy mercy; yea, let it be, “for thy goodness’ sake,” not mine, for in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no manner of thing that is good. Let thy goodness, then, be the motive, thy mercy the rule of all that grace, and of all those blessings thou vouchsafest unto my soul.—*Robert Mossom*.

Verse 7.—“According to thy mercy.” Moses was the first that brought up this happy expression, “According to thy mercy” (I know not where it is used by any other man), that is, according to the infinite mercy that is in thy heart and nature. David did next use it (Psalm xxv.), and in the great case of his sin and adultery

(Psalm li. 1), "that he would be merciful to him, according to the multitude of his mercies," And as he needed all the mercies in God, so he confessed the sin of his nature, and hath recourse to the mercies in God's nature. But it is Psalm xxv. 7, I pitch on; there he doth not content himself only with this expression, "*According to thy mercy,*" but he adds another phrase, "For thy mercy's sake," and "*goodness' sake.*" Muis observes in this coherence, "*Good and upright is the Lord*" (verse 8), that he centres in his nature. Thou hast a merciful nature; deal with me according to that, and for the sake of that, "*according to thy mercy,*" "*for thy goodness' sake.*" The meditation of that attribute was the foundation of his faith and prayer herein. When he hath done, he referreth himself to Moses, verse 11, "*For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*" He refers to that name proclaimed before Moses. Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7. But you will say, How do these expressions, "*for thy name's sake,*" "*for thy goodness' sake,*" "*for thy mercy's sake,*" imply the same as "*for himself,*" "*for his own sake*"? how do they involve the Godhead? Look to Isaiah xliii. 25, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake," that is, for myself. Isaiah xlviii. 11. "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it." You have it twice in one verse; and that which is "*for mercy's sake*" in one place, is "*for mine own sake*" in another, and behold it is I, I am he, as I am God, who doth it. What is this, but "*Jehovah, Jehovah, God merciful*"?—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 8.—"*Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*" As election is the effect of God's sovereignty, our pardon the fruit of his mercy, our knowledge a stream from his wisdom, our strength an impression of his power; so our purity is a beam from his holiness. As the rectitude of the creature at the first creation was the effect of his holiness, so the purity of the creature by a new creation, is a draught of the same perfection. He is called the Holy One of Israel more in Isaiah, that evangelical prophet, in erecting Zion, and forming a people for himself, than in the whole Scripture besides.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 8.—"*Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*" Will not the Lord, who is good, be as gracious to his enemies as he requires us to be to ours? It is his own law, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again." Exodus xxiii. 4. Now God meets us sinners, and all sinners as such are his enemies; he meets us straying like the beast without understanding; and what? will he not bring us again unto himself, the sole proprietary, by that first right of creation, and that more firm right of redemption?—*Robert Mossom.*

Verse 9.—"*The meek will he guide in judgment;*" or, *the poor* (namely, in spirit), will he make to tread in judgment, to foot it aright, to walk judiciously, to behave themselves wisely, as David did (1 Sam. xxiv.), so that Saul feared him. Natural conscience cannot but stoop to the image of God, shining in the hearts and lives of the really religious.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 9.—"*The meek will he guide in judgment.*" They have been made meek, i.e., desirous of being taught, and praying to be so; but, being now sensible of unworthiness, they are afraid that God will not teach them. This may be done to other sinners but not to them. Therefore they are told who may expect teaching, even they who desire and pray for teaching.—*John Berridge, 1716—1793.*

Verse 9.—"*He will guide the poor in judgment.*" Never will this docility be found in any man, until the heart, which is naturally elated and filled with pride, has been humbled and subdued. As the Hebrew word denotes the *poor* or *afflicted*, and is employed in a metaphorical sense, to denote the *meek* and *humble*, it is probable that David, under this term, includes the afflictions which serve to restrain and subdue the forwardness of the flesh, as well as the grace of humility itself; as if he had said, When God has first humbled them, then he kindly stretches forth his hand to them, and leads and guides them throughout the whole course of their life.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 9.—"*The meek,*" etc. Pride and anger have no place in the school of Christ. The Master himself is "*meek and lowly of heart;*" much more, surely, ought the scholars to be so. He who hath no sense of his ignorance, can have no desire, or capability of knowledge, human or divine.—*George Horne.*

Verse 9 (last clause).—The Lord will teach the humble his secrets, he will not teach proud scholars.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

*Verse 9 (last clause).*—Such as lie at his feet and say, “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth,” such whose hearts are *supple* and *soluble*, tractable, and teachable, so that a *little child* may lead them. (Isaiah xi. 6.) Austin was such an one. Saith he, “I am here an old man ready to learn of a young man, my coadjutor in the ministry, who hath scarce been one year in the service.”—*John Trapp*.

*Verse 10.*—“All the paths of the Lord,” אֲדָרָתָהּ *orchoth* signifies the tracks or ruts made by the wheels of wagons by often passing over the same ground. Mercy and truth are the paths in which God constantly walks in reference to the children of men; and so frequently does he show them mercy, and so frequently does he fulfil his truth, that his paths are easily discerned. How frequent, how deeply indented, and how multiplied are those tracks to every family and individual! Wherever we go, we see that God’s mercy and truth have been there by the deep tracks they have left behind them. But he is more abundantly merciful to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies; *i.e.*, those who are conformed, not only to the letter, but to the spirit of his pure religion.—*Adam Clarke*.

*Verse 10.*—“All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.”—As his nature is love and truth, so all his ways are mercy and truth. They are “mercy” in respect of aiming at our good, and “truth” in respect of fulfilling his promises and faithful carriage to us; therefore whatsoever befalls thee, though it be clean contrary to thy expectation, interpret it in love. Many actions of men are such as a good interpretation cannot be put upon them, nor a good construction made of them; therefore interpreters restrain those sayings of love, that it believes all, etc.; that is, *credibilia*, all things believable, otherwise to put all upon charity, will eat out charity. But none of God’s ways are such, but love and faith may pick a good meaning out of these. *A bono Deo nil nisi bonum*, from a good God there comes nothing but what is good; and therefore says Job, “Though he kill me, I will trust in him.” Endeavour to spy out some end of his for good at the present, and if none ariseth to thy conjecture, resolve it into faith, and make the best of it.—*Thomas Goodwin*.

*Verse 10.*—“Unto such as keep,” etc.: he is never out of the road of mercy unto them.—*Thomas Goodwin*.

*Verse 11.*—“For thy name’s sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.” I cannot do better than quote one of those beautiful passages of the great Viefyra, which gave him the character of the first preacher of his age:—“I confess, my God, that it is so; that we are all sinners in the highest degree.” He is preaching on a fast on occasion of the threatened destruction of the Portuguese dominion in Brazil by the Dutch. “But so far am I from considering this any reason why I should cease from my petition, that I behold in it a new and convincing argument which may influence thy goodness. All that I have said before is based on no other foundation than the glory and honour of thy most holy Name. *Propter nomen tuum*. And what motive can I offer more glorious to that same Name, than that our sins are many and great? For thy name’s sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great. I ask thee, saith David, to pardon, not every-day sins, but numerous sins, but great sins: *multum est enim*. O motive worthy of the breast of God! Oh, consequence which can have force only when it bears on supreme goodness! So that in order to obtain remission of his sins, the sinner alleges to God that they are many and great. Verily so; and that not for love of the sinner nor for the love of sin, but for the love of the honour and glory of God; which glory, by how much the sins he forgives are greater and more numerous, by so much the more ennobles and exalts itself. The same David distinguishes in the mercy of God greatness and multitude: greatness, *secundum magnam misericordiam tuam*; multitude, *et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum*. And as the greatness of the divine mercy is immense, and the multitude of his lovingkindnesses infinite; and forasmuch as the immense cannot be measured, nor the infinite counted, in order that the one and the other may in a certain manner have a proportionate material of glory, it is necessary to the very greatness of mercy that the sins to be pardoned should be great and necessary to the very multitude of lovingkindnesses that they should be many. *Multum est enim*. Reason have I then, O Lord, not to be dismayed because our sins are many and great. Reason have I also to demand the reason from thee, why thou dost not make haste to pardon them?”—*Viefyra, quoted by J. M. Neale*.

*Verse 11.*—“For thy name’s sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity.” It is a very

usual notion by "*name*" to understand honour and glory. When God saith to David, "I have made thee a name like the name of men that are in the earth;" when the church saith to God, "Thou didst get thee a name as it is this day;" it is manifest that by name glory is intended. Suitable to this it is that famous men are called by the Hebrews, *שמך כבודך* (Gen. vi. 4), and by the Latins, *virum nominum*, men of name, in which sense the poet adorneth it with these epithets—

"Magnum et memorabile nomen,"

or great and memorable. Thus, when God forgiveth sin, he doth it *for his name's sake*, that is, for his own honour and glory. Indeed, God's own glory is the ultimate end of all his actions. As he is the first, so he is the last, the efficient, and the final cause; nor is there anything done by him which is not for him. The end of our actions must be his glory, because both our being and working are from him; but the end of his work is his own glory, because his being and acting are of and from himself. Among all divine works, there is none which more setteth forth his glory than this of remission. Sin, by committing it, brings God a great deal of dishonour, and yet, by forgiving it, God raiseth to himself a great deal of honour. "It is the glory of a man," and much more of God, "to pass by an offence;" as acts of power, so acts of grace, are exceeding honourable. The attributes of God's grace, mercy, goodness, clemency, shine forth in nothing so much as in pardoning sins. Paul speaks of riches of goodness which attend God's forbearance; how much greater riches must there needs be in forgiveness? Nay, indeed, God hath so ordered the way of pardon, that not only the glory of his mercy, but justice, yea, of his wisdom in the wonderful contemperation of both these, is very illustrious. *Nomen quasi notamen, quia notificat*, the name is that which maketh one known; and by remission of sins, God maketh known his choice and glorious attributes; and for this end it is that he vouchsafeth it. It is a consideration that may be our consolation. Since God forgiveth sins *for his name's sake*, he will be ready to forgive many sins as well as few, great as small; indeed, the more and greater our sins are, the greater is the forgiveness, and, consequently, the greater is God's glory; and therefore David, upon this consideration of God's name and glory, maketh the *greatness of his iniquity* a motive of forgiveness. Indeed, to run into gross sins, that God may glorify himself by forgiving them, is an odious presumption, but to hope that those gross sins we have run into may, and will, be forgiven by God to us, being truly penitent, *for his name's sake*, is a well grounded expectation, and such as may support our spirits against the strongest temptations to despair.—*Nathanael Hardy*.

*Verse 11.—"Pardon mine iniquity; for it is great."* He pleads the greatness of his sin, and not the smallness of it: he enforces his prayer with this consideration, that his sins are very heinous. But how could he make this a plea for pardon? I answer, Because the greater his iniquity was, the more *need* he had of pardon. It is as much as if he had said, Pardon mine iniquity, for it is so great that I cannot bear the punishment; my sin is so great that I am in necessity of pardon; my case will be exceedingly miserable, unless thou be pleased to pardon me. He makes use of the greatness of his sin, to enforce his plea for pardon, as a man would make use of the greatness of calamity in begging for relief. When a beggar begs for bread, he will plead the greatness of his poverty and necessity. When a man in distress cries for pity, what more suitable plea can be urged than the extremity of his case? And God allows such a plea as this: for he is moved to mercy towards us by nothing in us, but the miserableness of our case. He doth not pity sinners because they are worthy, but because they need his pity. . . . Herein doth the *glory of grace* by the redemption of Christ much consist; namely, in its sufficiency for the pardon of the *greatest* sinners. The whole contrivance of the way of salvation is for this end, to glorify the free grace of God. God had it on his heart from all eternity to glorify this attribute; and therefore it is, that the device of saving sinners by Christ was conceived. The greatness of divine grace appears very much in this, that God by Christ saves the *greatest* offenders. The *greater* the guilt of any sinner is, the more glorious and wonderful is the grace manifested in his pardon. Rom. v. 20. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The apostle, when telling how great a sinner he had been, takes notice of the abounding of grace in his pardon, of which his great guilt was the occasion. 1 Tim. i. 13, 14. "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and



love which is in Christ Jesus." The Redeemer is glorified, in that he proves sufficient to redeem those who are exceeding sinful, in that his blood proves sufficient to wash away the greatest guilt, in that he is able to save men to the uttermost, and in that he redeems even from the greatest misery. It is the honour of Christ to save the greatest sinners, when they come to him, as it is the honour of a physician that he cures the most desperate diseases or wounds. Therefore, no doubt, Christ will be willing to save the greatest sinners, if they come to him; for he will not be backward to glorify himself, and to commend the value and virtue of his own blood. Seeing he hath so laid out himself to redeem sinners, he will not be unwilling to show that he is able to redeem to the uttermost.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 11.—“*Pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*” Is any man miserable, are his miseries great, are they spiritual, are they temporal? Undoubtedly, if he be humbled in the sense of them, and see himself unworthy of any mercy, he may still be assured of mercy. Though there be spiritual evils, yet if a man see himself wretched, and miserable, the more heavy he finds his iniquity to be, the more hope of mercy there is for him: the Lord’s mercy is over all his works, therefore is he much more merciful to such. If a man hath a feeling of his miseries and unworthiness then he may use this argument for mercy, *my miseries are great*: even as David did, “*O Lord, be merciful to me, and pardon my iniquity, for it is great.*” And the more miserable men are in their own sense, the fitter objects they are for God to show mercy unto. Thus it was with the publican, and so with the prodigal; therefore never doubt, though thy iniquities be never so great, there is a sea of mercy in God. Bernard well observes the difference between justice and mercy; justice requires that there should be desert, but mercy looks upon them that are miserable; and, saith the father, true mercy doth affect misery; mercy doth not stand upon inquisition, but it is glad to find occasion of exercising itself.—*Richard Stock.*

Verse 11.—“*Mine iniquity . . . is great.*” Such who come to God to have their sins pardoned, they look upon them as great sins. “*Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.*” The original word as well signifies *many* as *great*—“*My sins are great and many,*” many great sins lie upon me, pardon, oh! pardon them, O Lord, &c. . . . In the opening of this point, I would show *why* such as come in a right way for pardon do look upon their sins as *great* sins. 1. Sinners that come to God for pardon and find it, do look upon their sins as *great* sins, because against a *great* God, great in power, great in justice, great in holiness. I am a *worm*, and yet sin, and that boldly against a God so *great*; for a worm to lift up himself against a great and infinite God; oh! this makes every little sin *great*, and calls for *great* vengeance from so *great* a God. 2. Because *they have sinned against great patience*, despising the goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering of God, which is called, “*treasuring up wrath.*” Rom. ii. 4, 5. . . . 3. Sins do appear *great* because *against great mercies*. Oh! against how many mercies and kindnesses do sinners sin, and turn all the mercies of God into sin! . . . . 4. That which *greatens* sin in the eyes of poor sinners that cry for pardon, is, that *they have sinned against great light*—light in the conscience; this heightens sin exceedingly, especially to such as are under gospel means; and is indeed the sin of all in this nation; there’s nothing more abaseth a soul than this, nothing makes it more difficult to believe pardon, when humbled for it. . . . . 5. *Continuance in sin* much *greatens* sin to a poor soul that is after pardon; especially such as are not very early converted. Psalm lxxviii. 21. Oh! I added sin unto sin, saith a poor soul, spending the choice time of my youth in sin, when I might have been getting the knowledge of Jesus Christ and honouring of God. This lay close upon David’s spirit, as appears from the seventh verse: “*Oh! remember not the sins of my youth.*” Yet we do not find that David’s youth was notoriously sinful; but inasmuch as he spent not his youth to get knowledge, and to serve the Lord fully, ’twas his burden and complaint before the Lord; much more such whose youth was spent in nothing but vanity, profaneness, lying, swearing, profaning of the Sabbath, sports, pastimes, excess of riot, and the like, when God lays it in upon their consciences, must be grievous and abominable to their souls. . . . . 6. *Multitudes of sins* do make sin appear great; this made David cry out for “*multitude of mercies.*” Psalm ii., and xl. 12. . . . . 7. Another thing that *greatens* sin is, that it was *against purposes and resolutions of forsaking such and such sins*; and yet all broken, sometimes against solemn vows, against prayers. . . . . 8. Sin appears *great* when seen by a poor soul, because it was *reigning* sin. Rom. v. 6. “*Sin reigned unto death,*” etc. Oh! saith a poor humbled sinner, I did not only *commit* sin, but I was the *servant* and *slave* of sin. . . . . 9. Sin in the fountain

*makes it great.* As it may be said, there is more water in the fountain than in the pools and streams it makes. . . . So in the nature, in the heart, is there, as in the fountain, and therefore 'tis more there than in the breakings forth of it in the outward man. . . . 10. A sinner drawing nigh to God for pardon sees his sin as *great*, because thereby he was *led captive by the devil* at his will. . . . 11. Sin appears *great*, because *great is the wrath of God against sin.* Rom. ii. 12. The way of any sinner's deliverance from such wrath shows sin to be exceeding *great in the price and ransom that is paid for the salvation of him from his sins*—the price of the blood of the eternal Son of God. . . . 13. Lastly, this consideration also *greatens* sin, inasmuch as a poor creature *hath drawn and tempted others* to sin with him, especially such as have lived more vainly and loosely, and it lies hard upon many a poor soul after thorough conviction.—Anthony Palmer (—1678), in "The Gospel New-creature."

Verse 11.—I plead not, Lord, my merits, who am less than the least of thy mercies and as I look not upon my merit, so nor do thou look upon my demerit; as I do not view my worthiness, so nor do thou view my unworthiness; but thou who art called the *God of mercy*, be unto me what thou art called; make good the glory of thine own name in being merciful unto my sin, of which I cannot say as Lot of Zoar, "Is it not a little one?" No, it is *great*, for that it is against thee so great a God and so good to me: *great*, for that my place, my calling, my office, is great. The sun, the higher it is, the less it seems; but my sins, the higher I am the greater they are, even in thine and others' eyes.—Robert Mossom.

Verse 11.—Plead we the greatness of our sins not to keep us from mercy, but to prevail for it: "*Pardon mine iniquity*;" why so? "*for it is great.*" "Heal my soul for I have sinned against thee." Psalm xli. 4. "Do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee." Jer. xiv. 7. This is a strong plea, when sincerely urged by an humble and contrite spirit. It glorifieth God as one that is abundant in goodness, rich in mercy, and one with whom are forgivenesses and plenteous redemption; and it honoureth Christ as infinite in mercy. Hence also the Lord himself, when he would stir up himself to choice acts of mercy to his poor people, he first aggravateth their sin against him to the highest, and then he expresseth his royal act of grace to them. So Isaiah xliii. 22—25. "Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel; thou hast not honoured me with thy sacrifices, but thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."—Thomas Cobbel, 1608—1686.

Verse 11.—"Oh," says Pharaoh, "take away these filthy frogs, this dreadful thunder!" But what says holy David? "Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant!" The one would be freed from punishment, the effect of sin; the other from sin, the cause of punishment. And it is most true that a true Christian man is more troubled at sin than at frogs and thunder; he sees more filthiness in sin than in frogs and toads, more horror than in thunder and lightning.—Jeremiah Dyke's "Worthy Communicant," 1645.

Verse 11.—Pharaoh more lamented the hard strokes that were upon him, than the hard heart which was within him. Esau mourned not because he sold the birth-right, which was his sin, but because he lost the blessing, which was his punishment. This is like weeping with an onion; the eye sheds tears because it smarts. A mariner casts overboard that cargo in a tempest, which he courts the return of when the winds are silenced. Many complain more of the sorrows to which they are born, than of the sins with which they were born: they tremble more at the vengeance of sin, than at the venom of sin; one delights them, the other affrights them.—William Secker.

Verse 12.—"What man is he that feareth the Lord?" Blessed shall he be—1. In the sacred knowledge of Christ's will; "*Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*" 2. Blessed shall he be in the quiet peace of a good conscience; "*His soul shall dwell at ease.*" 3. Blessed he shall be in the present comfort of a hopeful progeny; "*His seed shall inherit the earth.*"—Robert Mossom.

Verse 12.—"What man is he that feareth the Lord?" There is nothing so effectual to obtain grace, to retain grace, as always to be found before God not over wise, but to *fear*: happy art thou, if thy heart be replenished with three fears; a fear for received grace, a greater fear for lost grace, a greatest fear to recover grace.—Bernard.

Verse 12.—“*He that feareth the Lord.*” Present fear begetteth eternal security : fear God, which is above all, and no need to fear man at all.—*Augustine.*

Verse 12.—“*Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose,*” i.e., that the good man shall pitch upon. God will direct him in all dealings to make a good choice, and will give good success. This is not in a man’s own power to do. Jer. x. 23.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 13.—“*His soul shall dwell at ease ; and his seed shall inherit the earth.*” The holy fear of God shall destroy all sinful fears of men, even as Moses’ serpent devoured all those serpents of the magicians. The fear of God hath this good effect that it makes other things not to be feared ; so that the soul of him who feareth the Lord doth dwell, as *in rest*, so in goodness ; as *in peace*, so in patience, till this moment of time be swallowed up in the fulness of eternity, and he change his earthly dwelling for an heavenly mansion, and his spiritual peace for an everlasting blessedness.—*Robert Mossom.*

Verse 13.—“*His soul shall dwell at ease.*” *Shall tarry in good things*, as it is in the Vulgate. Unlike the soul of Adam, who, being put into possession of the delights of paradise, tarried there but a few days or hours.—*Gerhohus, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 13.—“*His soul shall dwell at ease.*” He expresses with great sweetness spiritual delectation, when he says, “*His soul shall tarry in good things.*” For whatever is carnally sweet yields without doubt a delectation for the time to such as enjoy it, but cannot tarry long with them ; because, while by its taste it provokes appetite, by its transit it cheats desire. But spiritual delights, which neither pass away as they are tasted, nor decrease while they refresh, nor cloy while they satiate, can tarry for ever with their possessors.—*Hugo Victorinus (1130), quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 13 (*first clause*).—In the reception of the gifts of God, they do not devour them without feeling a sense of their sweetness, but really relish them, so that the smallest competency is of more avail to satisfy them that the greatest abundance is to satisfy the ungodly. Thus, according as every man is contented with his condition, and cheerfully cherishes a spirit of patience and tranquility, his soul is said to *dwell in good*.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 13.—“*The earth,*” or *the land*, to wit, Canaan ; which was promised and given, as an earnest of the whole covenant of grace, and all its promises, and therefore it is synecdochically put for all of them. The sense is, his seed shall be blessed.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 14.—“*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him,*” etc. It is the righteous that is God’s friend, it is to him that God is joined in a loving familiarity, it is to him that God revealeth his secret, telling him what misery and torments he hath reserved for them who by wickedness flourish in this world. And indeed the Lord doth not more hate the wicked than he loves the godly : if he keeps far from the froward, as being an abomination unto him, his very secret shall be with the righteous, as with his dearest friend. It is an honour to him to whom a secret is committed by another, a greater honour to him to whom the king shall commit his own secret ; but how is he honoured to whom God committeth his secret ? for where the secret of God is, there is his heart and there is himself. Thus was his secret with St. John, of whom St. Bernard saith, by occasion of the beginning of his gospel, “*Doth he not seem unto thee to have dived into the bowels of the divine Word, and from the secrets of his breast, to have drawn a sacred pith of concealed wisdom ?*” Thus was his secret with St. Paul, who saith, “*We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew.*” 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. St. Gregory reads, for the secret of God, as the Vulgar Latin doth *sermocinatio Dei*, the communication of God is with the righteous ; but then addeth, *Dei sermocinari est per illustrationem suæ presentis humanis mentibus arcana revelare*, God’s communication is, by the illustration of his presence, to reveal secrets to the minds of men. But to consider the words somewhat more generally. There is no less a secret of godliness, than there is of any other trade or profession. Many profess an art or a trade, but thrive not by it, because they have not the secret and mystery of it ; and many profess godliness, but are little the better for it, because they have not the true secret of it : he hath that, with whom God is in secret in his heart ; and he that is righteous in secret, where no man sees him, he is the righteous man with whom the secret of the Lord is.—*Michael Jermin, D.D., 1591—1659.*

Verse 14.—“*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him,*” etc. There is a vital sense in which “the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God;” and in which all the realities of Christian experience are utterly hid from his perceptions. To speak to him of communion with God, of the sense of pardon, of the lively expectation of heaven, of the witness of the Holy Ghost, of the struggles of the spiritual life, would be like reasoning with a blind man about colours, or with one deaf about musical harmony.—*John Mortson.*

Verse 14.—“*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him,*” etc. Albeit the Lord’s covenant with the visible church be open, and plain in itself to all men in all the articles thereof, yet it is a mystery to know the inward sweet fellowship which a soul may have with God by virtue of this covenant; and a man fearing God shall know this mystery, when such as are covenanters only in the letter do remain ignorant thereof; for to the *fearers of God* only is this promise made—that to them the Lord will show his covenant.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 14.—“*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.*” The gospel, though published to all the world, yet it is entitled a mystery, and a mystery hid, for none know it but the saints, who are taught of God, and are his scholars. John vi. 45. That place shows that there must be a secret teaching by God, and a secret learning. “If they have heard, and been taught of God.” Now God teacheth none but saints, for all that are so taught come unto him: “Every one who hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” Ay, but you will say, Do not many carnal men know the gospel, and discourse of things in it, through strength of learning, etc.? I answer out of the text (Col. i. 26, 27), that though they may know the things which the gospel reveals, yet not the riches and glory of them, that same rich knowledge spoken of in the word, they want, and therefore know them not; as a child and a jeweller looking upon a pearl, both look upon it, and call it by the same name; but the child yet knows it not as a pearl in the worth and riches of it as the jeweller doth, and therefore cannot be said to know it. Now in Matt. xiii. 45, a Christian only is likened to a merchantman, that finds a pearl of great price, that is, discovered to be so, and sells all he hath for it, for he knows the worth of it. But you will say, Do not carnal men know the worth of the things in the gospel, and can they not discourse of the rich grace of Christ, and of his worth? I answer, yes, as a man who hath gotten an inventory by heart, and the prices also, and so may know it; yet never was he led into the exchequer and treasury, to see all the jewels themselves, the wardrobe of grace, and Christ’s righteousness, to see the glory of them; for these are all “spiritually discerned,” as the apostle says expressly, 1 Cor. ii. 14.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 14.—“*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.*” The truth and sincerity of God to his people appears in the openness and plainness of his heart to them. A friend that is close and reserved, deservedly comes under a cloud in the thoughts of his friend; but he who carries, as it were, a window of crystal in his breast, through which his friend may read what thoughts are writ in his very heart, delivers himself from the least suspicion of unfaithfulness. Truly, thus open-hearted is God to his saints: “*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.*” He gives us his key, that will let us into his very heart, and acquaint us what his thoughts are, yea, were, towards us, before a stone was laid in the world’s foundation; and this is no other than his Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11), “One who knows the deep things of God;” for he was at the council-table in heaven, where all was transacted. This, his Spirit, he employed to put forth and publish in the Scriptures, indited by him, the substance of those counsels of love which had passed between the Trinity of Persons for our salvation; and that nothing may be wanting for our satisfaction, he hath appointed the same Holy Spirit to abide in his saints, that as Christ in heaven presents our desires to him, so he may interpret his mind out of his word to us; which word answers the heart of God, as face answers face in the glass.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 14.—“*The secret of the Lord.*” This “secret” is called a *secret* three ways. 1. *Secret* to the eye of sole nature, and thus it is not meant; for so the grace of Christ is a *secret* only to heathens and such as are blind as they, for common Christians know it—the rind of it. 2. *Secret* to the eye of taught nature, nor thus is it meant; for so the grace of Christ is a *secret* only to the ignorant sort of Christians; many carnal gossellers that sit under a good ministry know it and the bark of it. 3. *Secret* to the eye of enlightened nature, and thus it is meant; for so the grace of Christ is a *secret* to all un sanctified professors, whether learned or unlearned, namely, the

pith of it ; for though great doctors and profound clerks, and deep studied divines unconverted, know the doctrine of grace, and the truth of grace ; though they can dispute of grace and talk of the glory of grace, yea, and taste a little the good word of grace, yea, and understand it generally, it may be as well as St. Paul and St. Peter, as Judas did, yet the special and the spiritual knowledge thereof, for all their dogmatical illumination, is a *secret* unto them.—*William Fenner*.

*Verse 14.*—“*The secret.*” Arminius and his company ransack all God’s *secrets*, divulge and communicate them to the seed of the woman, and of the serpent all alike ; they make God’s eternal love of election no *secret*, but a vulgar idea ; they make the mystery of Christ, and him crucified, no *secret*, but like an apothecary’s drug, catholical ; they make the especial grace of God no *secret*, but a common quality ; faith no *secret*, but a general virtue ; repentance and the new creature no *secret*, but an universal gift ; no *secret* favour to St. Peter, but make God a party *unto*, not to love St. Peter more than Judas ; no *secret* intent to any one person more than another ; but that Christ might have died for all him, and never a man saved ; no *secret* working of the Lord in any more than other ; but for anything that either God the Father hath done by creating, God the Son by redeeming, or God the Holy Ghost by sanctifying, all the world were left to their scrambling—take it if you will, if you will not, refuse. They say God would have men to be saved, but that he will not work it for his own part, rather for this man of that man determinatively that he be saved.—*William Fenner*.

*Verse 14.*—“*He will shew them his covenant,*” or, *and he will make them to know* (for the infinitive is here thought to be put for the future tense of the Indicative, as it is Eccles. iii. 14, 15, 18 ; Hos. ix. 13 ; xii. 3), *his covenant*, i. e., he will make them clearly to understand it, both its duties or conditions, and its blessings or privileges ; neither of which ungodly men rightly understand. Or, he will make them to know it by experience, or by God’s making it good to them ; as, on the contrary, God threatens to make ungodly men to *know his breach of promise*. Numb. xiv. 34. Or, as it is in the margins of our Bibles, *and his covenant* (is, i. e., he hath engaged himself by his promise or covenant) *to make them know it*, to wit his secret, i. e., that he will manifest either his word or his favour to them.—*Matthew Pool*.

*Verse 14.*—It is neither learning nor labour that can give insight into God’s secrets, those *Arcana imperii*, “*The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.*” Matt. xiii. 11. “*The mind of Christ.*” 1 Cor. ii. 16. These things come by revelation rather than by discourse of reason, and must therefore be obtained by prayer. Those that diligently seek him shall be of his *Cabinet Council*, shall know his soul secrets, and be admitted into a gracious familiarity and friendship. “*Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*” John xv. 15.—*John Trapp*.

*Verse 14.*—Walking with God is the best way to know the mind of God ; friends who walk together impart their secrets one to another : “*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.*” Noah walked with God, and the Lord revealed a great *secret* to him, of destroying the old world, and having him in the ark. Abraham walked with God, and God made him one of his privy council : “*Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do ?*” Gen. xxiv. 40, and xviii. 17. God doth sometimes sweetly unbosom himself to the soul in prayer, and in the holy supper, as Christ made himself known to the disciples in the breaking of bread. Luke xxiv. 35.—*Thomas Watson*.

*Verse 15.*—“*Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord.*” Though we cannot see him by reasons of our present distance and darkness, yet we must look towards him, towards the place where his honour dwells, as those that desire the knowledge of him and his will, and direct all to his honour as the mark we aim at, labouring in this, that “*whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.*”—*Matthew Henry*.

*Verse 15.*—“*Mine eyes.*” As the sense of sight is very quick, and exercises an entire influence over the whole frame, it is no uncommon thing to find all the affections denoted by the term “*eyes.*”—*John Calvin*.

*Verse 15.*—“*He shall pluck my feet out of the net.*” An unfortunate dove, whose feet are taken in the snare of the fowler, is a fine emblem of the soul, entangled in the cares or pleasures of the world ; from which she desires, through the power of *grace*, to fly away, and to be at rest, with her glorified Redeemer.—*George Horne*.

Verse 17.—“*The troubles of my heart are enlarged.*” Let no good man be surprised that his affliction is great, and to him of an unaccountable character. It has always been so with God’s people. The road to heaven is soaked with the tears and blood of the saints.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 17.—“*O bring thou me out of my distresses.*” We may not complain of God, but we may complain to God. With submission to his holy will we may earnestly cry for help and deliverance.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 18.—“*Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.*” We may observe here, that *sickness and weakness of the body come from sin, and is a fruit of sin.* Some are weak, and some are sick, “for this cause.” I shall not need to be long in the proof of that, which you have whole chapters for, as Deut. xxviii. 27, seq.; and many Psalms, cvii., and others. It is for the sickness of the soul that God visits with the sickness of the body. He aims at the cure of the soul in the touch of the body. And therefore in this case, when God visits with sickness, we should think our work is more in heaven with God than with men or physic. Begin first with the soul. So David (Psa. xxxii. 5), till he dealt roundly with God, without all kind of guile and confessed his sins, he roared; his moisture was turned into the thought of summer. But when he dealt directly and plainly with God, and confessed his sins, then God forgave him them, and healed his body too. And therefore the best method, when God visits us in this kind, is to think that we are to deal with God. Begin the cure there with the soul. When he visits the body, it is for the soul’s sake: “Many are weak and sickly among you.”—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 18.—“*Look upon mine affliction and my pain.*” In sickness of body trust to Jesus, he is as powerful and as willing to help us now as he was to help others in the days of his flesh. All things are possible to us if we believe. It is but a word for him to rebuke all storms and tempests whatsoever. Let us not do like Asa, trust only in the physician, or in subordinate means, but know that all physic is but dead means without him. 2 Chron. xvi. 12. Therefore, with the means, run to Christ, that he may work with them, and know that virtue and strength comes from him to bless or curse all sort of means.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 19.—“*Consider mine enemies,*” etc. Or look upon them; but with another kind of look; so as he looked through the pillar of fire upon the Egyptians, and troubled them (Exod. xiv. 24), with a look of wrath and vengeance. The arguments he uses are taken both from the quantity and quality of his enemies, their number and their nature, “*For they are many;*” the hearts of the people of Israel, in general, being after Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 12, 13); and so the spiritual enemies of the Lord’s people are many; their sins and corruptions, Satan, and his principalities and powers, and the men of this world. “*And they hate me with cruel hatred;*” like that of Simeon and Levi (Gen. xlv. 7); their hatred broke out in a cruel manner, in acts of force and cruelty; and it was the more cruel, inasmuch as it was without cause; and such is the hatred of Satan and his emissaries against the followers of Christ; who breathe out cruelty, thirst after their blood, and make themselves drunk with it; even their tender mercies are cruel, and much more their hatred.—*John Gill.*

Verse 19.—“*Consider mine enemies.*” God needeth not hound out many creatures to punish man, he doeth that on himself. There is no kind of creature so hurtful to itself as he. Some hurt other kinds and spare their own, but mankind in all sorts of injuries destroyeth itself. Man to man is more crafty than a fox, more cruel than the tiger, and more fierce than a lion, and in a word, if he be left to himself man unto man is a devil.—*William Struther’s “Christian Observations,”* 1629.

Verses 19, 20.—“*Consider mine enemies. . . . O keep my soul and deliver me.*” We may say of original concupiscence, strengthened and heightened by customary transgressions, its name is legion, for it is many. Hydra-like, it is a body with many heads; and when we cut off one head, one enormous impiety, there presently sprouts up another of like monstrous nature, like venomous guilt. From the womb then it is of original sin and sinful custom, as from the belly of the Trojan horse, there does issue forth a whole army of unclean lusts, to surround the soul in all its faculties, and the body too in all its members.—*Robert Mossom.*

Verse 20.—“*Let me be not ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.*” When David reaches verse 20, we are reminded of Coriolanus betaking himself to the hall of

Attius Tullus, and sitting as a helpless stranger there, claiming the king's hospitality, though aware of his having deserved to die at his hands. The Psalmist throws himself on the compassions of an injured God with similar feelings; "*I trust in thee!*"—Andrew A. Bonar.

Verse 21.—"*For I trust in, or wait on thee.*" As preservation is a continued creation, so is *waiting* a continued trusting; for, what trust believes by faith, it *waits* for by hope; and thus is trust a compound of both.—Robert Mossom.

Verse 22.—"*Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*" If thou wilt not pity and help me, yet spare thy people, who suffer for my sake, and in my sufferings.—Matthew Pool.

Verse 22.—"*Redeem Israel,*" etc. *In vita vel post mortem meam,\** either whiles I live, or after my death. This is every good man's care and prayer. None is in case to pray for the church, that hath not first made his own peace with God.—John Trapp.

Verse 22.—This most beautiful of "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" closes with a sweet petition—such an one, as every one of the true Israel of God would wish to depart with on his lips, "*Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*" It breathes the same holy aspiration as the aged Simeon's, "Lord! now lettest thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."—Barton Bouchier.

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#### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—Heavenly machinery for uplifting an earthbound soul.

Verse 1.—Genuine devotion described and commended.

Verse 2.—The soul at anchor, and the two rocks from which it would be delivered.

Verse 3.—Shame out of place and in place.

Verse 4.—Practical divinity the best study; God the best teacher; Prayer the mode of entrance into the school.

Verses 4, 5. "*Shew.*" "*Teach.*" "*Lead.*" Three classes in the school of grace.

Verse 5.—I. Sanctification desired. II. Knowledge sought. III. Assurance enjoyed. IV. Patience exercised.

Verse 5.—"*Thou art the God of my salvation.*" A rich and overflowing text.

Verse 5 (*last clause*).—How to spend the day with God.—Matthew Henry.

Verse 6.—The antiquity of mercy.

Verses 6, 7.—The three Remembers.

Verse 7 (*first clause*).—The best Act of Oblivion.—Thomas Fuller.

Verse 7.—Oblivion desired and remembrance entreated. Note "*my,*" and "*thy.*"

Verse 8.—Opposing attributes co-working. God teaching sinners—a great wonder.

Verse 9.—"*The meek.*" Who they are? What are their privileges? How to be like them?

Verse 9 (*first clause*).—Moral purity needful to a well-balanced judgment.

Verse 10.—God's mercy and faithfulness in providence, and the persons who may derive comfort therefrom.

Verse 11.—A model prayer. Confession, argument, entreaty, etc.

Verse 11.—Great guilt no obstacle to the pardon of the returning sinner.—Jonathan Edwards.

Verse 12.—Holiness the best security for a well ordered life. Free-will at school, questioned and instructed.

Verse 13.—A man at ease for time and eternity.

Verse 14.—I. A secret, and who know it. II. A wonder, and who see it.

*Verse 15.* I. What we are like. A silly bird. II. What is our danger? "Net." III. Who is our friend? "The Lord." IV. What is our wisdom? "Mine eyes," etc.

*Verse 16.*—A desolate soul seeking heavenly company, and an afflicted spirit crying for divine mercy. Our God the balm of all our wounds.

*Verses 16—18.*—David is a petitioner as well as a sufferer; and those sorrows will never injure us that bring us near to God. Three things he prays for:— I. *Deliverance.* This we are called to desire, consistently with resignation to the divine will. II. *Notice.* A kind look from God is desirable at any time, in any circumstances; but in affliction and pain, it is like life from the dead. III. *Pardon.* Trials are apt to revive a sense of guilt.—*William Jay.*

*Verse 17.*—Special seasons of trouble and special resort to prayer for special deliverance.

*Verse 18.*—Two things are here taught us:—I. That a kind look from God is very desirable in affliction. II. That the sweetest cordial under trouble would be an assurance of divine forgiveness. I. That a kind look, etc. (subdivisions), 1. It is a look of special observation. 2. It is a look of tender compassion. 3. It is a look of support and assistance (with God, power and compassion go together). II. That the sweetest cordial, etc. (subdivisions), 1. Because trouble is very apt to bring our sins to remembrance. 2. Because a sense of pardon will in great measure remove all distressing fears of death and judgment. *Improvement.* 1. Let us adore the goodness of God, that one so great and glorious should bestow a favourable look upon any of our sinful race. 2. Let the benefit we have received from the Lord's looking upon us in former afflictions, engage us to pray, and encourage us to hope, that he will now look upon us again. 3. If a kind look from God be so comfortable, what must heaven be!—*Samuel Lavinton.*

*Verse 18.*—I. It is well when our sorrows remind us of our sins. II. When we are as earnest to be forgiven as to be delivered. III. When we bring both to the right place in prayer. IV. When we are submissive about our sorrows—"Look," etc.—but very explicit about our sins—"Forgive," etc.

*Verse 19.*—The spiritual enemies of the saint. Their number, malice, craft, power, etc.

*Verse 20.*—Soul preservation. I. Its twofold character, "Keep," and "deliver." II. Its dreadful alternative, "Let me not be ashamed." III. Its effectual guarantee, "I put my trust in thee."

*Verse 20.*—A superhuman keeping, a natural fear, a spiritual trust.

*Verse 21.*—The open way of safety in action, and the secret way of safety in devotion.

*Verse 22.*—Jacob's life, as typical of ours, may illustrate this prayer.

*Verse 22.*—A prayer for the church militant.